# PELLIDIES MINTERE

A BUNN VAN ORMER



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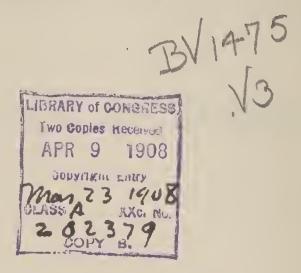
IN

#### RELIGIOUS NURTURE

BY

A. B. BUNN VAN ORMER.

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TO EDWARD

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I.

ORIENTATION OF THE PROBLEM OF RELIGIOUS NURTURE.



## Studies in Religious Nurture.

ORIENTATION OF THE PROBLEM OF RELIGIOUS NURTURE.

WHAT attitude shall persons interested in religious work take to the problem of spiritual nurture? Or shall they have a conscious and deliberatively-chosen attitude?

If they are seeking for guidance, if they are conscious of imperfection in their work, if they long for a greater fruitage of consecrated lives from those worked with, if they believe that there may be, somewhere, conditions that have as yet been ignored, it will be well for them to carefully determine their attitude to the problem. And it is hard to think of anyone engaged in religious work who, in the face of the possibilities open to, and of

the responsibilities resting on, the religious worker, can feel quite at ease in satisfaction with the efforts put forth or the results achieved.

In other words, the question of an attitude to this problem is a question for all religious workers.

It is true that some may take their attitude without reflecting much on the grounds for doing so, may drift into it under the influence of imitation and of transmitted practices and methods, or be carried to it on the current of deduction from some partial or inadequately supported "general principle." But it is wiser to make the attitude a conscious one, and to adopt it only after deliberation. By so doing there will enter into the attitude any elements that might unconsciously have worked for good, and elements that otherwise would have gone unrecognized are more likely to be given a place of usefulness.

That we may the more truthfully approach the problem of religious nurture, let us dwell awhile together on some attitudes that, whether consciously or unconsciously held, though each contains truth, are inadequate. And, having found elements of truth in these several attitudes, a construction of an adequate attitude out of these elements can be attempted.

Despite the too prevalent tendency to ignore the work of the Holy Spirit in the affairs of men, there are doubtless many whose conception of religious nurture makes it an affair of the Holy Spirit almost entirely. Such look askance at any effort to investigate the problem with a view of rendering the work done more effective. They shrink from such study, lest by it they should in some way discredit the Spirit's work, should show a lack of reliance upon Him, and because of this lack of reliance should not have His aid.

Others there are who write and act as if the problem of religious nurture were entirely within our hands, easily within our comprehension. These write of methods and conditions, of devices and incentives, of laws and principles, until we are led to forget the Holy Spirit and to view the problem manwardly.

This is an attitude that is peculiarly per-

suasive for its own acceptance, in that it unduly exalts man and his powers of comprehension. Theories and attitudes that plead with us in the name of our power to think win from us a measure of acceptance for themselves that may often turn us from the path of truth to lose us in the maze of hypotheses and unbased inferences.

There exists a variation of this attitude that, by finding in the laws and principles of child-life the results of God's handiwork, claims to honor the Spirit all the more by employing these laws of His creative enactment. But there is to be found in connection with this attitude a failure to give the Spirit His rightful place.

These attitudes are defective. They fail to give to the Holy Spirit the pre-eminence due to Him and His function, failing thus even when seeking His honor. And they lose sight of the complexity of the problem of religious nurture. The first theory makes the problem a simple one by reducing the processes of nurture to terms of incomprehensibility. Nurture is the Spirit's function,

and of His working we can know nothing. Hence the simple problem—just let the Spirit do the work He must do, and drift along in our practices as those before us did, looking for nothing better.

The second attitude makes the problem a simple one by making it too comprehensible—a thing we can fully understand, and easily too. This is in accord with a tendency of the day. Detecting this tendency, Henry Davies, of Yale, has written:

"The new psychology underestimates the complexity of the child mind." 1

The child-mind, as we shall see, is not the only source of complexity for our problem; but it is a source.

These two attitudes have their characteristic dangers. One thinking the problem wholly incomprehensible, and one thinking the problem too comprehensible, will both stop far short of the duty and of the privilege of a religious worker.

The right attitude towards the problem of religious nurture is not a new attitude. How

<sup>1 &</sup>quot;International Journal of Ethics."

many "new" things in educational thought wear the age-betokening crown of glory! In the writings of John Amos Comenius, the Moravian Bishop and educational reformer, who, some think, was once called to the presidency of Harvard University, we find expression given to the attitude which religious workers should hold to the problem of religious nurture:

"For God . . . through His Holy Ghost and by the intervention of natural means." 1

"The Holy Spirit usually employs natural agencies, and has chosen parents, teachers, and ministers. . . ." 2

This attitude has room for complexity. And the problem is a complex one, indeed. The complex nature of the soul was seen and felt by Wordsworth when he wrote:

"Not chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy scooped out
By help of dreams, can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often when we look
Into our minds." 3

<sup>1 &</sup>quot;Great Didactic," London, page 201.

² Ib., page 371.

<sup>3</sup> Preface to the "Excursion."

And when President Hall confesses that to him there is but one thing more awful than Kant's starry heavens, "The body and soul of a child," he but gives expression to a recognition of the complex nature of the soul.

But the use of "usually" in the second of the quotations that deal with God's ways of working, leaves room for such an enlargement of our notion of the problem's complexity as makes room for the Holy Spirit's working in ways that are beyond our comprehension.

Who that has had experience in religious work has not had evidences of the Spirit's working in ways to man incomprehensible? Nor is science, sane and candid, willing to deny the possibility of the Holy Spirit's operating without the mediation of the usual agencies. Professor James, in his series of Gifford lectures on Natural Religion, given at the University of Edinburgh, says:

"But if you, being orthodox Christians, ask me, as a psychologist, whether the reference of a phenomenon to a subliminal self does not exclude the notion of the direct presence of the Deity altogether, I

have to say frankly that as a psychologist I do not see why it necessarily should." 1 On the other hand, the use of "usually," with what follows it, asserts the great fact of the Spirit's employment of means in the accomplishment of His work. To His work religious nurture belongs. Comenius sees instrumentalities for the Spirit's use in parents, teachers, and ministers; in both their precepts and their lives the Spirit finds instrumentalities. He uses personality, an incarnation of truth, as a herald of better and of nobler things. This thought of our co-operating with God and being used by Him is one that ennobles work and lifts the worker to the plane whence no one can see life as anything but very much worth living. The sustaining force of such consciousness is beautifully shown in the life of Horace Mann, who was heard to say, when near life's close:

"I, too, have been a co-worker with God, for the uplifting of humanity through the public schools, free to all."

<sup>1 &</sup>quot;Varieties of Religious Experience," page 242.
[Italics ours.]

Such reflections comforted and cheered and sustained him when discouragements were on every hand.

And, beyond this, we can read into the Comenian attitude the fact that the Spirit operates through the laws of our mental life. To one whose life-philosophy is theistic there are of necessity such laws. He could not conceive of God as operating in any capricious, fortuitous way. God's very nature makes such a conception of His activities impossible to us. To comprehend these laws is to think God's thoughts after Him. To employ such laws is to work in harmony with God to the accomplishment of ends God has set for us to reach. To Froebel, who has much to say of God in his "Education of Man," there are such laws. He says:

"I am firmly convinced that all the phenomena of the child-world, those which delight us as well as those which grieve us, depend upon fixed laws as definite as those of the cosmos, the planetary system, and the operations of nature; and it is therefore possible to discover them and examine

them. When once we know and have assimilated these laws, we shall be able powerfully to counteract any retrograde and faulty tendencies in the children, and to encourage, at the same time, all that is good and virtuous." <sup>1</sup>

Nor is it the avowed theist alone who sees written within the nature of the child these laws. The whole mission of the psychologist, as a scientist and irrespective of a theistic as of an atheistic life-philosophy, is to search for such laws and to describe them when found. When he does not believe in God (the cases are rare) he finds these laws so unmistakably operating in human nature that out of them he "organizes guidance" in all realms save the religious.

These laws are the "natural agencies" at the disposal of the Spirit. May we not conclude, then, that when we use them we are facilitating the work of the Holy Spirit and are thereby making ourselves more efficient agents in His hands? If this inference is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Letters of Froebel, quoted in Warner Library of Literature, page 6031.

legitimate, there is a vital corollary connected with it. We must seek to understand more and more fully these laws that we may the more effectively apply them, that through us the Spirit may the more efficiently work in securing religious nurture that shall result in complete life-surrender to and service of the Christ.

But, having done all we can to discover these laws—temporarily or partially hidden from us for God's own wise reasons, we doubt not—and using them as best we know or can learn how, let us not lose sight of the fact that our heavenly Father is ever willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him so to do, and that the Spirit can work in ways incomprehensible to us in the accomplishment of the Father's will.

All this is "orthodox," we confess. But it is not here asserted because it is "orthodox." It is asserted, rather, because, as we see it, it is orthodox—it is the right thinking, the true attitude, the right attitude, the attitude forced upon one whose mind is open to influences and to guidance from both science and revela-

The attitude has nothing to fear from the over-zealous advocates of either of these sources of guidance. It can be safely assumed by any religious worker who is really concerned with the great problem of soul nurture. And, being assumed, this attitude makes possible the putting under contribution of every or of any branch of science, to the end that helpfulness and light may be gotten. Nor does it compel us to rely alone on the unsatisfactory finality of these sources. Wise is the religious worker who, after he has done all he can do, bends the knees to Him whose glory he seeks in the doing of the work. Eternity alone will make possible a computation of the potency of the bent knees!

#### II.

ARE OUR PRESENT METHODS OF BIBLE SCHOOL WORK ADEQUATE?



### ARE OUR PRESENT METHODS OF BIBLE SCHOOL WORK ADEQUATE?

Sometimes under pressure for a categorical answer we feel constrained to reply in ways that are misunderstood by those hearing us. If pressed for a categorical answer to the question asked, our answer would be negative; we would subject ourselves, in giving this answer, to adverse criticism, might be exposed to the charge of disloyalty to the great cause of the Bible School, accused of a lack of sympathy with the work, and have other things said whose common characteristic would be that which is common and applicable to the things specified, namely, that they are not true.

But fortunately there is no pressure for an answer that is brief. Our liberty in answering is not even limited by your forbearance in hearing.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Read to Ministerial Union, General Synod Lutheran, of Philadelphia.

And how shall the question be answered? To answer it negatively (if authoritatively and generally so answered) might sow seeds of discouragement in ground already prepared for the sowing and having promise of an abundant yield. To answer it negatively (if authoritatively and generally so answered) might, on the other hand, give impetus to movements looking towards better and better things; yes, even longingly to the best things for the spiritual nurture of young people.

An affirmative answer to the question is fraught, perhaps, with even more danger than is a negative one. If there were to prevail among Bible School workers the impression that present methods, conceptions, comprehension of their work are adequate, it would engender a self-satisfaction that would make further development undesired, and therefore impossible; a result truly lamentable if the facts in the case should prove the affirmative answer to be an incorrect one.

And yet, in practice, if not in theory, an affirmative answer is being given to this question continually by many workers. The answer thus

given may be accounted for by temperamenta factor that needs to be more adequately comprehended and more extensively applied in religious work. To some people finality is so desirable that the least semblance of it is sufficient to justify a resting on the oars. To some the present, and its methods and conceptions —on the theory that whatever is is best—are not to be minimized by the supposition that they could in any way be improved upon. To some this sense of the sufficiency, of the adequacy of the methods of the present is peculiarly pleasant and satisfying. naught of impulsion to further search for helpfulness; it moves along the lines of least resistance; it enables one to do the work required without having the additional burden of trying to discover how that work may be better done, so done as to secure a larger fruitage.

In answering a question such as this, one dare not frame his answer to avoid results that might attend the acceptance of the answer. The facts alone should be the guide and should be allowed to be determinative of the end to which they lead.

Are Bible School methods adequate? To what? To the accomplishment of the mission of the Bible School. And this mission is that of so ministering to the members of the school as to secure in the fullest possible measure the growth and the development of their spiritual life, a development that shall include the public confession of the Christ and the dedication of the life to His service. Surely adequacy to this end is nothing easily attained. And we refuse to allow the end to be otherwise defined for us, to let it be degraded to the matter of attendance, of large contributions, of having studied certain portions of the Bible, certain truths of geography, of history.

Approaching the question in the light of the end of the methods, it seems that the facts forbid a categorical "yes" or "no" to the question that is set us for our perplexity. They rather demand that both affirmation and negation enter into the answer.

So far as one phase of our work is concerned there is adequacy in our methods. This phase is that of the instrumentalities placed at our disposal by Him whom we serve in our Bible School work. These instrumentalities are the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, whose instrument the Word is. These are both available, and, we believe, are in some measure relied upon by most teachers and workers in the Bible School. In so far as these are used, relied on, there is adequacy in our methods from one point of view.

We would not have this adequacy so intensely and over-zealously defined as to leave no room in the Bible School curriculum for the co-ordination of religious literature with the work of the school. Nor would we have present-day or recent Christian biographies eliminated. Both literature and biography objectify and intensify (so far as effectiveness to young people is concerned) Biblical truths.

There remain the two standpoints of the teacher and of the pupil from which to view our question. And viewing the question from either of these, or from both of them, it must surely be seen, if vision is not defective, (and there are things that cause defective vision here as elsewhere,) that there is at least a considerable element of inadequacy.

The inadequacy from the point of view of the teacher may really be made to comprehend that from the point of view of the pupil. The teacher's inadequacy may manifest itself in what is fundamental to all our religious work, namely, life. Every uplift of the teacher into the nobler, truer Christian manhood or womanhood diminishes this inadequacy. This inadequacy of life, this failure to *live* the truths taught, can and will neutralize, if not counteract, an adequacy along other lines.

And yet the second line of adequacy, that of a comprehension of the laws implanted in children whereby they grow religiously, spiritually, is by no means an insignificant matter. We fear that this is often belittled. But this fact argues more against the mental adequacy of the belittler than against the use in our work of the laws of God as they are written in the child, as they manifest themselves in the child's development.

We have no reason to believe that the last word on child-life has been written. Every year adds to our knowledge of the child. And until we can feel that the last word on childlife has been written, we may not justly contend in an unqualified way that our Bible School methods are adequate.



#### III.

WHAT MAY THE BIBLE SCHOOL LEARN FROM THE SECULAR SCHOOL?



# WHAT MAY THE BIBLE SCHOOL LEARN FROM THE SECULAR SCHOOL?

"LARGE numbers of religious teachers, most intelligent and zealous in their piety, seek a more and more perfect adoption of the secular school methods."—Commissioner W. T. Harris.<sup>1</sup>

Those who have the means of knowing somewhat of what is being done to-day in Bible School work are ready to grant the truthfulness of the assertion of the late Commissioner of Education.

The tendency he has detected certainly exists—is widely prevalent, if it is not rapidly growing. At this fact, in view of conditions and activity in the secular school world, and in view of the constitution of man as a social being, we need not be surprised. But, unless that is best which is, unless the things which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Report for 1896-97, xxiv.

are, are because of their survival through fitness, it may not be amiss to interrogate this tendency; to inquire as to the "whither" of it, though we may not now care to look into the whence in any detail.

Underlying this tendency to adopt from the secular school is the most encouraging feature about Bible School work as it exists to-day: a willingness to learn; a dissatisfaction with its present achievements; its dream of a day of greater usefulness, when it shall have arrived at a more adequate comprehension of the perplexingly difficult problem of religious nurture and of its relation thereto. As never before the Bible School is asserting its dignified function, and is putting under contribution to helpfulness any material that bears the credentials of serviceability and reliability. turning in its search for aid to the secular school and adopting therefrom. It is, in many instances, wisely questioning before its adoption. But it questions only that it may take into itself the really valuable. It loses not sight of its desire for development, for increased efficiency, working as it does under many handicaps. But it is becoming loath to incorporate into itself practices that have not been subjected to the crucible of calm and critical reflection, in the light of its own aim and of the materials at its disposal.

But the tendency to adopt the secular school methods has underlying it also an assumption that is unjustified and, for the Bible School intent on adoption, unsafe. The tendency is underlaid by the assumption of the adoptability, the adaptability, of secular methods; the assumption of the perfection of the secular school whereby it may serve at once as a determinator of an end for the Bible School and as a source whence methods of reaching that end may be gotten. Secular school workers who unsympathetically criticise the Bible School are more or less swayed by this assumption, and, through the comparative terms in which they couch their criticisms, generate the assumption on the part of Bible School workers.

But there is no ground whatever for the assumption. On the other hand, the secular school itself, as it is found in theory, is reaching out hands that appeal for help. Speaking

of the elementary school, Ossian H. Lang, of the New York School Journal, says:

"... The need of a thorough reconstruction of the elementary school is being keenly felt. Cautious proceeding here is a rule of wisdom." 1

And, looking through and beyond the evidences of "results"—percentages, exhibition work, commencement essays, prizes, honors, diplomas, and the rest—till his gaze falls on the child, the only educational touchstone, Professor Baldwin, of Johns Hopkins University, says:

"Every time we send a child out of the home to the school, we subject him to experiment of the most serious and alarming kind. . . . It is perfectly certain that two out of every three children are irretrievably damaged or hindered in their mental and moral development in the school." <sup>2</sup>

Nor are these opinions as yet antiquated.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Forum, 1903, page 264.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> "Mental Development in the Child and the Race," page 38.

Mr. Parsons' article on "Making Education Hit the Mark," says:

"School boards are all too regularly composed of men ignorant of that which they prescribe; college councils are the scene of faction and of misshapen compromise. Blinding to both, and to the public as well, is the confusion and forgetfulness of aim. We must clear up our notions as to what we want to do in our public schools; we must separate and distinguish our various aims; we must direct our education straight; we must find out where we wish to go, or we shall continue to arrive nowhere." <sup>1</sup>

And in a somewhat recent article in "Education," by Frederick E. Bolton, of the Iowa State University, we read:

"The public schools need a copious baptism of scholarship and much improved methods."

In these assertions, whatever else there may be, there is that that justifies the assertion that to assume the perfection of the secular

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Atlantic Monthly, April, 1906.

school is to go far wide of the facts. If we borrow, or adopt, or learn from the secular school, we should do so with a fixed conception of its present imperfect, nascent condition.

A comparison of the two institutions should furnish help in arriving at an answer to the question under consideration. And the institutions lend themselves to such comparison, revealing similarities and contrasts that should be taken account of. The comparison may be made along several lines. We may consider the object dealt with by the two institutions; the subject-matter dealt with and the consequent methods used; and the respective aims, giving as they do more or less direction to the procedures found in the institutions.

In considering the object dealt with, the difficulty of definition and choice of terms arises. Use the term of your preference, be it mind, soul, spirit, ego, consciousness; and you may safely grant that the object dealt with by the two institutions is one and the same object. The question of dichotomy or trichotomy is, for our present concern, an indifferent one, leaving unaffected the affirmation just made.

Our concern is rather with the question of the older "faculty" way of thinking of mental activity, as over against the newer "functional" way of viewing it. It is no longer necessary for us to posit a distinct faculty whereby spiritual things are apprehended; we dare now conceive of the mind turning in its entirety to the contemplation of an object of thought, be that object material or immaterial, ethical or non-ethical, "secular" or religious. A religious or spiritual state of mind is such not because a special "faculty" is functioning, but because the mind is functioning upon subject-matter that is religious or spiritual. So far as this applies to ethical matters, this conception is clearly expressed by Porter. says:

"It follows that the moral nature, or the moral faculty, are but other names for the human faculties (mind) when *employed* upon a special subject-matter, and in a peculiar manner. The products of this special but natural mode of activity are moral ideas and moral emotions." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1 &</sup>quot;Elements of Moral Science," page 138.

May we not safely hold to the same view in matters of the religious life? Careful introspection fails to bring to light any procedure other than this as taking place within the mind at a time when the mental complex may be called a "religious state of mind."

If we can accept this view of religious mental states; if we can hold that—

"... Religious love is only man's natural emotion of love directed to a religious object; religious fear is only the ordinary fear of commerce, so to speak, the common quaking of the human breast in so far as the notion of divine retribution may arouse it; religious awe is the same organic thrill which we feel in a forest at twilight, or in a mountain gorge; only this time it comes over us at the thought of our supernatural relations; and similarly of all the various sentiments which may be called into play in the lives of religious persons," 1

then we have a conception that will prove serviceable and fruitful in a degree impossible to the "special faculty" conception. It is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> James' "Varieties of Religious Experience," page 27.

only by virtue of this conception that, from the viewpoint of the object dealt with, there is to be found a basis for expecting helpfulness from the secular school for the work of the Bible School. But this same conception of the nature of religious mental states makes it evident that there are very pronounced limitations to this helpfulness, so long as our consideration of it moves along the line of the object with which the two institutions deal.

In comparing the two institutions as to both subject-matter and aim it may be well to draw sharply the line of demarcation between the school as it is and the school as it might be. Were our concern with the school as it might be, should be, as it sometime will be, the treatment of these two sections would be different and the Bible School would find much, very much, which it could safely borrow. But there is a marked discrepancy between the school as it is and as it should be. Yet the borrowing goes on from the school as it is.

The subject-matter of the secular school as it exists is largely of such a nature as to demand an inductive presentation of itself, a presentation that rises step by step, carefully and by means of analysis and final synthesis of common and essential elements, to the general truth or principle in the light of which individual cases are studied and come to be understood. This process is descriptive of some teaching as it is, and of teaching as it should be, in much of the work of the secular school.

Yet there is often need of authoritative teaching, even in dealing with subject-matter that has been treated in this inductive way by scholars walking the pathway of original investigation.

Practical limitations—those of inadequate laboratory equipment; the lack of training on the part of teachers for the carrying on of the more complicated demonstrations; the time limitations imposed by the course of study, itself an expression of the impatience of society to get its members into a productive stage—compel many a resort to authority even when dealing with subject-matter capable of a different treatment. This is true of much work in college and university, as well as in high and grammar and primary schools.

We may even say that this resort to authority in places where it is possible for the actual processes to be gone through with is necessitated by the principle of "division of labor," and that it, operating in the line of this principle, really makes further scientific development possible.

But not all of the subject-matter of the secular school is capable of this inductive, analytic, generalizing treatment. The whole realm of history is one in which the final appeal is one of reliance on what someone has said or written about what has been done. "Original sources" but make for us a more remote, though a more reliable (when demonstrated to be genuine) authority. The descriptive studies of the earth and its people, whatever special line it may follow, employs this same reliance upon authority.

The subject-matter of the Bible School is, confessedly, predominantly of such a nature as to require an authoritative treatment, rather than an analytic-inductive one. The great facts of the religious life are such as to forever baffle the attempt of the human mind to

establish them by means of "scientific" (the method of the natural science) demonstration, as if that were the only kind of demonstration, and a kind infallible and absolutely reliable. The facts of revelation must be presented and received authoritatively. One cannot arrive at the facts involved in the atonement by any process known to the natural sciences. In darkness men have groped; in darkness we would be groping now, had not a light shined to dispel that darkness.

But the facts of the religious life are not such as to be entirely a matter of authority, capable of no induction, not open to experimental tests, having no room for a free play of the minds of those being instructed in affairs of the religious life. Nor are the credentials whereby these authoritative deliverances are accepted as such a matter of authority, of unquestioned acceptance. They make their appeal in the high court of reason and of the reasonable, and thus afford exercise for mental functions other than those involved in belief, in the acceptance of things delivered authoritatively. And, surely, in the complex affairs of

life, to all of which religion is applicable, and in all of which either religion or irreligion inheres, there is a legitimate field for the play of the activities of observation, analysis, and induction.

The subject-matter of the Bible School is predominantly authoritative; but there is much, very much, room for teaching processes that are other than authoritative in their nature.

There are thus seen to be resemblances and differences between the subject-matter of the two institutions. Both have material that can be, should be, inductively treated; both have material that must be authoritatively treated. In the secular school induction predominates, or should; in the Bible School, authority. Were the latter to borrow from the former in

<sup>1</sup> It is a fact that much of the material that should be studied at first hand, in the analytic-inductive way, is, in many of the schools, taught in a very different way; that many pupils seldom, if ever, get away from the authority of the printed page; for if the teacher speaks authoritatively, it is apt to be but a warming over of textbook assertions. Happily there is less and less of this as the years go by.

an indiscriminate, unreflective way, it would be in danger, from the point of view of subject-matter, of borrowing unwisely.

It is in matters of their distinctive aims, much more than in matters of the object dealt with and of the nature of the subject-matter employed by them, that the differentiation of the two institutions becomes most marked. We are still concerned with the school as it is, from which we feel constrained to borrow. Whether we view the aim of the secular school as pre-eminently cultural or vocational; or whether we think these should intermingle equally or in a definite proportion, the charge that the secular school of to-day is too intensely intellectual in its aim, is a charge that can be easily and successfully defended. We by no means lay the fault of this exclusively at the door of the school. But the fact, wherever the fault belongs, is one that is in evidence to those who have eyes to see. The emotional and volitional phases of soul-life are subordinated to the intellectual. And the development of the moral and religious phases of soul-life are almost entirely ignored.

By way of substantiating this charge, we turn to one of the most remarkable of educational reports, that issued by Chicago's Educational Commission in 1900. The Commission had the interests of more than 384,000 children under consideration. It consisted of twelve men. President Harper was the Commission's chairman, and George F. James its There were fifty-four advisory secretary. members, representing eighteen different States. Of these advisory members, twenty were representatives of the leading universities of the country; eighteen were superintendents of city school systems; four were State superintendents; two high school principals; four were State normal school principals, and six prominent names belonged to none of these classes. The Commission is thus seen to be representative—whether we view it from a geographical, a university, a city, a state, or a normal school point of view.

And what are the things with which the secular school is to concern itself, as this Commission and its many advisors see its function, the aim of the public school, to be? The index

shows that attention was given, among other things, to buildings, janitors, civics, domestic science, commercial training, compulsory attendance, manual training, drawing, German, Latin, music, nature study, text-books, training for citizenship, etc. These are all vital things, and with the others treated by the Commission, should have the place given them in this exceptionally valuable production.

We will question the index as to the Commission's definite references to moral nurture. Under M we read, "Manual Training, Mayor, Music." Turning, in seach of the Commission's views as to the secular school's functions in religious nurture, to R, we read, "Resident Commissioners: appointment of, duties of," etc.

We are not concerned about a criticism of this state of affairs. We want to show only that "the moral and religious phases of soullife are almost entirely ignored" by the secular school, as it exists.

But just here the Bible School finds its reason for being, that it may provide for the nurture of the moral and religious phases of soul-life.

There is thus a discrepancy, not an antagon-

ism, however, between the two aims that leads us to fear that we may easily go too far in our borrowing, in our learning, from the secular school.

We have thus found that from the view-point of the object dealt with we are entitled to look for helpfulness from the secular school. But from the viewpoints of the subject-matter and the aims of the two institutions we have been constrained to materially qualify our looking-for-helpfulness conclusion. We may answer the inquiry of the caption by saying there are some things we may borrow from the secular school; there are some things the secular school cannot teach us, which must be learned in other ways.

The Bible School, a distinctively religious institution, aims to reach the emotional and volitional centers, that the Christ may be enshrined in the heart and served in the life. But there is only one way by means of which these may be reached. That way is the way of intellectual activity. There is no other way. Faith cometh not but by hearing, and hearing is an intellectual process. Love, in

way—contemplation of the object around which the emotion centers. There is no difference, no exception in the working of this principle, whether the object loved be a doll, a pet, a parent, or God. Nor can there ever be a volitional resultant in character without the intellectual and emotional stages.

Here is where the secular school is most nearly perfect, in its comprehension of the intellectual activities. Nor does the fact that these activities are made to be an end in themselves by the secular school detract from its comprehension of the activities. Here may the Bible School learn. Here has the Bible School been too slow to learn in the past. And in the borrowing that it is now doing it often ignores this source of helpfulness, satisfying itself with a copying of features which are much less desirable and serviceable than other things that may be borrowed.

The secular school can teach us much about the intellectual part of our work. It can tell us how interest may be generated and used by way of securing a permanency of impression; how material can be presented so as to be most readily comprehended; how to rightly use repetition so as to avoid monotony and contribute to fixation of the material taught; how to employ the principle of apperception in more ways, and in more significant ways, than by using a mere approach to a lesson—the average approach itself needing to be carefully treated in order that it may be apperceived, and not become a distracting factor; how to attend to the physical factor in education, so as to make air and movement and light and dress and seating all conspire to help us in our work; how to employ the concrete in our presentation of the lessons.

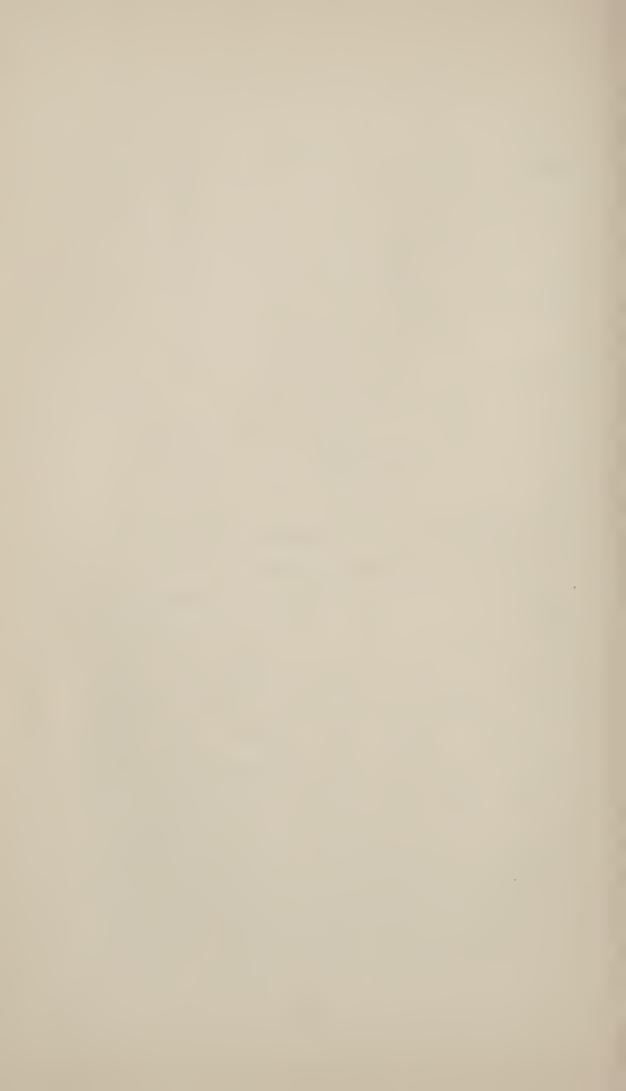
In addition to these things, the secular school, in the recent child-study movement, is growing into a fuller appreciation of child-hood, a larger sympathy with childhood, a more intense regard for the laws of child-life, and a willingness to be guided by these laws in its treatment of children. Here may the Bible School learn. Here should it study carefully. Here should it thoroughly learn the greatest lesson the secular school can teach it

—to study its own problems. For, it may be that some of the willingness to adopt secular school methods is an evidence of lethargy and of indolence, and therefore calls for reprobation rather than for the commendation that should be given were the willingness to adopt an outgrowth of a different attitude.

No one can carefully study the tendency pointed out by Commissioner Harris without detecting the fact that there is possible an adoption of the spirit and an adoption of the letter. Some, much, of the adoption is of the letter, is of the things of the surface, the less vital and significant things. There is some excuse for this. Much is made of these things by the secular school. They are much in the eye of the public, so easily satisfied with the surface things, as a rule, till the deeper things have been clearly shown them. Gradings, examinations, promotions, rewards, etc., hold a "bad eminence" to-day in the secular school. To adopt them in the letter is at best a questionable procedure for the Bible School. There is that in their spirit (save the rewards), however, that is valuable and worth adopting.

### IV.

IN DEFENCE OF EARLY RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.



## IN DEFENCE OF EARLY RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

Does it seem to be a strange caption? It is none the less a justified one. Both the practice of many and the theory of some call in question the wisdom of early religious instruction. The theoretical calling in question takes place in the name of science, and in such a way as to give a supposedly scientific basis to the indifference of so many homes to the matter of a development of the germinal religious phase of child-life.

The starting point from which some call in question the wisdom of efforts directed towards the religious nurture of the children through instruction is found in the nature of the religious ideas children have or get as a result of the instruction given them.

The nature of these ideas may be seen in the following examples gathered from the literature of child-study and from personal knowledge.

#### A child's prayer:

"Please, God, Grandpapa has gone to you. Take good care of him. Please always mind and shut the door, because he can't stand drafts."

#### A prayer to the devil:

A little child was seen to bury a piece of paper in the ground. On examination of the paper by a curious adult, it was seen to contain the following: "Dear devil, please come and take Aunt. I can't stand her much longer."

#### Men are gods:

Seeing a group of workmen, a child said:

"Mamma, are these gods?"

"Gods? Why?"

"Because they make houses and churches, same as God makes moons and people and ickle dogs."

#### A wrestle with omnipresence:

A girl who had been taught that God is everywhere said, one day:

"Mamma, me don't see God. I dess He's don to take a walk."

#### God possesses a body:

A child who had heard the expression "this footstool" used in a conversation asked the man on whose knees she sat at the time the meaning of the expression. On being told that the earth is often spoken of as "God's footstool," she exclaimed:

"O-h-h! what long legs!"

Another child drew a picture of Jesus and of God, making God have very long arms.

#### Heavenly mail facilities:

A child whose Grandmother had just died asked her mother if God had a street and a number. When asked why she wanted to know, she replied:

"Nothing, only I wanted to write a letter to Him to send Grandma back again."

#### A co-worker with God:

A three-year-old boy was with a woman whose home was a second home to him.

They were in the flower garden. Seeing a crocus in bloom, and remembering that the previous fall he had put the bulb into the ground (as one of his age so often does things, by the help of others), he asked, "Did I make that flower grow?" When told that God sent the rain and the sunshine which made it grow, he insisted that he had had a part in the process, and finally dropped the subject by saying:

"God and I make the flowers grow."

There is surely no good ground on which to dispute the characterization of these ideas which describes them as "vague, grotesque, and materialistic." They evidence very plainly the child's struggle to adjust his religious instruction and the facts of his everyday, sensible, tangible, visible experience.

Granting that these ideas are the possession of all children—for they are in greater or less degree, what is the conclusion that must be drawn from the fact? What bearing has the fact on the practice of early religious instruction? Here we find discordant answers.

The discord here found is the justification of the caption of the chapter.

In his work on "The Development of the Child," in the chapter on "The Place of Religion in the Development of the Child," Dr. Nathan Oppenheim draws from the nature of children's religious ideas the following conclusion (page 138):

"So long as the unripeness of their minds and their generally undeveloped state forbid the grasping of a full-grown system [italics ours], then something else which has more of stability and as much of disciplinary features should take the unfilled place."

The author seems to assume the principle that children should not be given anything they cannot understand. And in his application of this principle to matters of religious nurture he is most rigorous.

But this principle, while it contains an element of truth, unquestionably contains much of error. It is indeed true that it would be very unwise, to say the least, to make the giving to children of things wholly beyond their comprehension the ruling principle in educa-

tion, or the basis of curriculum arrangement; but to try to give them only such things as they can fully comprehend would be an absurdity. The absurdity would be that of attempting the impossible. We are not now concerned with final statements, such as most of the children, when grown to maturity, will be unable either to make or to comprehend. It is impossible to give to any child at the first presentation a notion that it can fully comprehend, that will not need to grow, to be added to, to be taken from, to be readjusted. Every year of life, every deepening of the channel of experience will bring contributions to correct, to enlarge, to qualify, conceptions that have been previously formed.

It is a mistake to keep from children the greater literature because they cannot fully comprehend it. Into its significance they will grow. Its difficulties will provoke observation and reflection, will challenge to interpretation. It is likewise a mistake to give them nothing but this. The partisans on the two sides of this controversy as to children's literature may well cease to contend. For, as long

as there are places common alike to the literaature and to the experience of the children, one may safely allow the better things, even though they be somewhat above the children; but there must be these common places.

The same holds good in the realm of religious instruction. There are sufficient places of contact with the children's experience to justify the presentation to them of spiritual truths. There are considerations that should rule in the choice of the material to be given to children as a means of nurture, but no one of these considerations can legitimately be made to exclude religious instruction.

Those who advocate the postponement of religious instruction till an age of maturity has been reached treat the religious ideas of children as if they were abnormal, thus ignoring the function of their crudeness, their vagueness, their materialism.

But these ideas are not in any sense abnormal; they are intensely normal, and of just such a nature as we should expect them to be, reasoning from what we know of the development of the child-mind. Professor Sully says:

"The teacher should remember that all knowledge proceeds from the vague and indefinite to the definite and exact; that clear ideas are formed by a gradual process of development."

Another writer has given the following form to the same thought, saying:

"The acquisition of this knowledge [other than that of religious things] comes in a slow and fragmentary way. For a long while it resembles a sort of patchwork, and not until after the lapse of years does it become homogeneous."

It does not seem credible, but it is true, that the author of the latter quotation is none other than Dr. Oppenheim himself. Only seventeen pages of his book have intervened between the sentence we are studying and this assertion. There is either an inconsistency here, or the laws of the mental life do not hold in the realm of religious things.

Dr. Oppenheim fears that because of the crudeness of these early religious ideas, including as they do elements that must later be eliminated, the child's faith in the entire sys-

tem will be shaken. Needless fear, unless the author allows no common ground between mental life and the religious life. A little boy's notion of "dog" was so vague at first that he applied the term to cats, etc., and even to his mother. As he matures and recalls this crudeness, or reads the record of the observation, will he have his faith in dogs shaken, will he question their existence? Why, then, his faith in religious things? Will he see in these crude notions of former years anything other than the way-stones of progress toward a more adequate and more nearly correct conception of things of the religious life?

So far is the early religious training of children from being ruled out by present-day studies of child-life, that it has never been shown to be so imperative, that its advisability has never been so clearly comprehended.

The psychological law of apperception, the law of the mind's grasping and comprehending new material through its relation to material that has been previously comprehended and worked over, pleads forcibly for an early training in religion, however crude it

may be, as a necessary condition of a later training which results in greater clearness. For it is only by means of a crude conception that we can ever approach more nearly to a conception lacking crudity.

Then, too, the delay in giving instruction in religious matters, if it were possible to prevent all religious contact with life on the part of the child, may result in an atrophying of the power to comprehend things of a religious However we may account for the fact of atrophy, there seems to be good reason to look for it to follow such treatment as is suggested for the religious elements in childlife. In the character of "Constance Trescott" Dr. S. Weir Mitchell works out to its bitter consequences this atrophy resulting on a denial to a child of the things that have to do with religion. In later life and in a time when there was need for the influences of religion in her life she was of necessity compelled to walk alone, dull, dead, to all the proffers of religion.

We have just said, "If it were possible to prevent all religious contact on the part of the child." But this is not possible to-day under normal conditions, and because the child will come in contact with religious customs and observances there is a necessity for instruction that he may grow along right lines and not be compelled later to undertake a reconstruction of character as well as of ways of thinking.

There is, then, the added fact that a child not instructed is in danger of being habituated to non-religious, or to irreligious things; the field of his life becoming pre-empted, it becomes very difficult, if not impossible, for religious things to find admittance.

"Let the child wait till he has grown and then choose his own religion," said an English statesman in the hearing of Coleridge. Coleridge, leading his friend into the garden, said, "I have decided not to put out any vegetables this spring, but to wait till August and let the garden decide for itself whether it prefers weeds or strawberries." This is the logic of the delayed instruction theory.

It is true that Dr. Oppenheim proposes to have morality grow during this period in which there is to be no religious instruction. But no growth of morality can satisfy the objections made against his contention.

This theory of delaying religious instruction is not a theory that has arisen with Dr. Oppenheim's book, in 1898. It was long ago valiantly championed by that most enigmatical, most paradoxical (in life as in his writings) Frenchman, Jean Jacques Rousseau. "Emile," about whose education he theorized so splendidly, was to be denied religious instruction till he should reach the age of from sixteen to eighteen years.

A peculiarity about Rousseau's "Emile" is that it had the power of inspiring others to educational effort. From it, the only work on education Pestalozzi ever read, the great Swiss educator drew much of inspiration. The book inspired a German father to test the theory of religious instruction it advocated. Compayre, in his "History of Pedagogy," quotes Villemain with reference to this experiment, as follows:

"One might have read, a few years ago, the account, or rather, the psychological confession of a writer (Sentenis), a German

philosopher whom his father had submitted to the experiment advised by the author of 'Emile.' Left alone by the death of a tenderly loved wife, this father, a learned and thoughtful man, had taken his infant son to a retired place in the country; and not allowing him communication with anyone, he had cultivated the child's intelligence through the sight of natural objects placed near him, and by the beauty of language, almost without books, and in carefully concealing from him all idea of God. The child had reached his tenth year without having either read or heard that great name. But then his mind formed what had been denied it. The sun which he saw rise each morning seemed the allpowerful benefactor of whom he felt the need. He soon formed the habit of going at dawn to the garden to pay homage to that god that he himself had made. His father surprised him one day, and showed him his error by teaching him that all fixed stars are so many suns distributed in space. But such was the keen disappointment and the grief of the child deprived of his worship, that the father, overcome, acknowledged to him that there is a God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth."

Thus there appears a second danger. If the child should not lose the power of forming religious conceptions, his life becoming preempted with the "ir-" or the "non"-religious, he may create for himself notions of beings answering to fundamental needs of his nature for some one, aside from mankind, to fear and love and rely upon. M. Compayre asks, "Will the child, with his instinctive curiosity, wait till his eighteenth year to inquire the cause of the universe? Will he not form the notion of a god in his own way?" From Professor Sully we have what is a virtual answer to this question, though not offered as such. He gives the facts of the self-evolved religious systems, liturgies, etc., of George Sand and of Goethe. These clearly show that the tendency is a characteristic of childlife. In one place Professor Sully says:

"Children seem disposed, apart from re-

ligious instruction, to form ideas of supernatural beings."

In another place he says:

"The liveliness of their imagination and their impulse of dread and of trust push them to a spontaneous creation of invisible beings."

Others have seen this same tendency. Professor Ladd says:

"The child . . . is naturally and normally, in manifold and subtle ways, not only capable of being religious, but bound to be religious."

Professor Earl Barnes says:

"I believe a child has need for a theology, and that if he is not given one he will create it. He early comes to a point where he seeks ultimate origins and ends."

It is interesting to note, in passing, the voice of a strange antagonist to the Rousseau theory and practice. We would expect from agnostics a most hearty concession of the neglect of religious instruction of the young. But, on turning to an article entitled, "The Religious Training of Children by Agnostics," written

by Ella Darwin, and published in the *Inter*national Journal of Ethics, we find this statement:

"He may cause them (offspring) to suffer, as it were, a spiritual blight by cutting them off from the spiritual life and traditions of mankind."

Luther was a pedagogue of much keener intuitions than either Rousseau or Oppenheim. To him these crude ideas of spiritual realities which we find children possessed of were not abnormal things to be prevented. He did not draw from their existence the inference that a child should not be instructed in matters of this kind till maturity had come. By no means. These ideas were normal, and shared the characteristics of all ideas. Out of these and by means of these, crude and materialistic though they were, the clearer ideas of later years were to come. His deduction from the fact of these ideas was that the teaching of religious things to children should, in a measure, be done in terms of such crude ideas, on the plane of the experience of the child. It is because of his clear recognition of the

function of these ideas that he wrote to his little son, Hans, a letter that has been characterized as "A model bit of theological teaching for a young child." The letter follows:

"Grace and peace in Christ, my dear little boy. I am pleased to see that thou learnest thy lessons well, and prayest well. Go on thus, my dear boy, and when I come home I will bring you a fine fairing. I know of a pretty garden where are merry children that have gold frocks, and gather nice apples and plums and cherries under the trees, and sing and dance, and ride on nice horses with gold bridles and silver saddles. asked the man of the place whose the garden was, and who the children were. He said: 'These are the children who pray and learn and are good.' Then I answered, 'I also have a son who is called Hans Luther. May he come to this garden and eat pears and apples and ride a little horse and play with the others?' The man said, 'If he says his prayers and learns and is good he may come; and Lippus and Jost may come, and they shall have pipes and drums and lutes and fiddles, and they shall dance and shoot with little cross-bows.' Then he showed me a smooth lawn in the garden laid out for dancing, and there the pipes and drums and cross-bows hung. But it was still early and the children had not yet dined; and I could not wait for the dance. So I said, 'Dear sir, I will go straight home and write all this to my little boy; but he has an Aunt Lena that he must bring with him.' And the man answered, 'So it shall be. Go and write as you say.' Therefore, dear little boy, learn and pray with a good heart, and tell Lippus and Jost to do the same, that you will all come to the garden together. Almighty God guard you. Your loving father, Martin Luther."1

What is this but a translation into terms of the child's experience and interests of the teachings of heaven, as given to us in terms of adult experience and interests of long ago? This and that are but feeble efforts to convey the blessedness of the house where the many mansions are; this and that are but letters

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Barnes' "Studies in Education," 1902.

with which we spell out the fact of God's love and of the provision which that love has made for all those who will meet the conditions of the full enjoyment of that love and its provisions: only the alphabets used differ; the facts spelled out are identical. By means of the two experience alphabets we learn to read the spiritual message for us. For naturally the child comes to spiritualize the truths that were once held in a materialistic sense.

The same need for a translation of spiritual things into terms of life-experience has been encountered by those who have worked with the child-races. It is related of the Jesuit fathers that, to overcome the savage's fear of starvation in heaven, it became necessary to give the assurance that heaven's stock of game was unlimited. And was there any reason why the same fathers, when they were compelled to wrestle with the theological question of heaven's tobacco supply, should not incorporate the tobacco patch into the description of the paradise—the "hunting ground" of the religion they taught? Game, tobacco, gold, palms, harps, walls of precious stones,

etc.—these are but alphabet material whereby the message becomes in part intelligible.

What, then, shall our conclusion be? Shall we conclude with Rousseau to postpone religious instruction till adolescence has well come on? Or shall we believe with Kant that "it is better, then, at an early hour to teach a child true religious notions"? Shall we not accept the advice of an ancient writer who believed in training up a child, and, accepting this advice, give ourselves to the task with the full assurance that revelation and science alike enjoin upon us the duty of teaching children the facts of the religious life?

## V.

A STUDY OF A CRITICISM OF THE BIBLE SCHOOL.



# A STUDY OF A CRITICISM OF THE BIBLE SCHOOL.

THE mere fact that an institution has been criticised ought not to cause immediate resentment and antagonism on the part of the institution's friends. These attitudes unfit one for a judicial sifting of presented facts and deduced conclusions, often carrying their possessor well into the realm of error. At other times they blind him to present error and thus make impossible an improvement sincerely wished for.

The one who criticises adversely is not by that fact marked as an antagonist bent on the destruction of the institution criticised. He may, indeed, be applying a painful remedy that the imperfect institution may be made more perfect; but in doing so he may show himself a friend.

Confessedly it is not easy to keep ourselves open to criticisms that are adverse. But, like many other duties which impel us, this is (75)

none the less our duty because it is difficult of achievement. We may need to listen for the sternness in the voice of duty, that we may yield obedience in this matter, and obeying, bring frank and unprejudiced minds to a consideration of a recently made criticism of the Bible school.

There are many who quote approvingly the well-known

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet,"

and who, having quoted the words, attempt to win sanction and acceptance for them by naming Shakespeare as their author. But does not the very reference of the quotation to Shakespeare suggest the fact that, Juliet to the contrary, there is or may be much in a name? May a name not stand for a depth and breadth and richness of experience, for a culture and development, for a patient and thorough specialization, for a cogency of intellectual powers, and an integrity of moral nature that conspire to qualify one to speak upon some particular subject with peculiar authority; to make the thought of one man

more trustworthy for guidance than that of another?

There is enough in the name of the author of the criticism we are to study to justify us in giving our attention to the criticism, attending dispassionately, and in expectation of some return for our attention; but there is not enough in this name to justify us in an unquestioning acceptance of what the author may be pleased to say.

The context-setting of the criticism is most interesting to anyone who is at all concerned about or with the problem of religious nurture. The author is antagonizing the secularization of the "day" school, a process that has made so much headway in many sections of the country, and which contains in itself, as the author thinks, elements that must make for national weakness and ultimate disintegration: a nation's strength and perpetuity being directly proportional to the moral vigor and firmness of the individual citizens; the development of this moral vigor and oak-like strength being impossible when completely dissociated from all religious instruction.

The author is anxious to demonstrate that there is a need of religious instruction in the day school. One line of demonstration assumes as proven the vital function of religion in all ethical instruction that aims at character transformation or formation. This having been disposed of, the need of religious instruction in the day school is made apparent by means of the to-be-studied criticism of the Bible school. If the Bible school does not give religious instruction, or if it gives it in such a way as to court and win failure for its efforts, then is there a need for some other institution; and the day school, already existent, is the institution chosen. In this line of demonstration, it will be noted, the more defective the work of the Bible school is found to be, the stronger is the argument against the secularized "day school."

But because of this very fact there exists a danger of overestimating the Bible school's defects, or of overstating rightly estimated defects. Not that this would result from a yielding to a conscious temptation; but that it might result under the sway of a tendency

not consciously operative. For in just this way men are swayed. The presence of an interest to be served makes very difficult the rendering of a judgment that is uncolored, unprejudiced, unmixed with personal preference or dislike, unswayed by a to-be-proven theory. All men need to guard against this tendency and to subject themselves to conscious check-tests that they may keep themselves as free from it as is possible.

Interesting as the context setting of the criticism is, there is that about it which admonishes us of the wisdom of having near at hand a "salt-shaker," as we pass to a study of a criticism of the Bible School.

### THE CRITICISM.

"ONLY a fraction of our children attend the Sunday-schools, and those who do are very badly taught. It is true that there are some marked exceptions, but on the whole it would be fair to say that the teaching done in the Sunday-schools is on the plane of the teaching done in secular schools seventy-five years ago. The children meet in one large room, in the midst of endless confusion and distraction for a parallel we should have to go to one of the old monitorial schools of England or to the Mohammedan University in Cairo. The little ones wear their unaccustomed finery, their new hats and sashes, gloves and parasols. Imagine teaching arithmetic to children so arrayed. At least nine-tenths, generally all of the teachers, are absolutely untrained; they are almost universally good and kind and respectable, but they have never considered the way in which the child's mind works, and they are as unfitted for teaching as were the people who kept the dame schools of half a century ago. When we come to curriculum and method the matter is even worse; there is little or no grading; at most, in nine Sundayschools out of ten, we have the primary class, the Sunday-school proper, and the Bible class for adults. Imagine a day school where all the children were taught the same thing over and over for ten years."—("Children's Attitude Toward Theology," in Barnes' "Studies in Education, 1902," page 285.) Let us note the several things that are said in this criticism.

"Only a fraction of our children attend our Sunday-schools."

This is not stated as a fault of the Bible School. But the assertion challenges thought. Not that it raises any question as to its truthfulness. That cannot be called in question by anyone conversant with the facts. But it leads those of us who are interested in the Bible School to question ourselves as to the possibility of placing the fault at the doors of workers in the Bible School—at our own doors. Can it be that those who do not attend have tried the institution and rejected it for some definite reason? Can it be that the institution is not so organized as to come into inviting contact with those who should be under its influence; that it has failed to appreciate the go-into-the-highways-and-compel-them-tocome command of the Master? Or is there some other explanation, some agency or influence that relieves the Bible School of all culpability? If so, what should be our attitude to this other agency or influence? If not, what shall be our attitude toward this fact of the small proportion of persons who are enrolled as members of the Bible School?

This asserted and existent fact is a lamentable one; for, even if the "day" school should do all Professor Barnes wants it to do, it would not adequately provide for the spiritual needs of children, and most of these young people not enrolled in Bible Schools have no religious nurture.

"Those who do [attend] are very badly taught."

By its strength this assertion begets a measure of antagonism that may easily prejudice the criticism to us. The strength of the assertion is seen in the use of "those who," an expression equivalent to "all"; in the use of the adverb of degree, "very," with which the author has been pleased to qualify "badly"—a strong word in itself. As if conscious of exaggeration in this statement, the author tells us, "there may be some marked exceptions."

There is an underlying assumption con-

nected with this "very badly taught" part of the criticism that should be pointed out. Failure to notice it is fraught with possibilities of discouragement to Bible School workers, as well as with possibilities of failure to help the children in the fullest possible measure. It is assumed in this criticism (and the assumption is not confined to this criticism by any means), that the work of the Bible School fails when it fails to teach well; that the test of efficient Bible School work is a matter of the way it teaches, and nothing more; that the potency of the Bible School is to be found entirely in the teaching process. Along with this assumption we must carry a restricted definition of teaching, making it a matter of giving instruction, of imparting information. But this assumption is wholly unwarranted. The teaching function of the Bible School, even when narrowly conceived, is vital; but it is not exclusively so. It is one factor. There are other factors, not-to-be-ignored factors, in the work of this institution for the nurture of the religious nature.

Yet there is a tendency to ignore these other

factors that is to be found in much of the theorizing and of the practice of the Bible School to-day. It is very easy to become so engrossed in one line of interest that there is little room for another. In our aping of the day school it is easy for us to overlook the special function of the Holy Spirit which serves as one mark of differentiation between the two institutions. It is a hard-to-prove proposition that a very skillful teacher, pedagogically considered, who undertakes the work of the Bible School with no reliance on, no petition to, the Holy Spirit, will do more effective work, so far as the real mission of the Bible School is concerned, than will be done by a pedagogically poorly-equipped-to-teach teacher who, conscious of imperfection and burning with a passion for souls, pleads for the Spirit's help. This is in no way a denial of the ideal condition which calls for both good teaching and firm reliance on the Holy Spirit.

Another ignored factor calls for attention later.

"The teaching done in Sunday-schools

is on the plane of the teaching done in secular schools seventy-five years ago."

A careful and unprejudiced study of the practices of the two institutions compared in this assertion will demonstrate that the assertion is too strong, much too strong. Such study will show, we have reason to believe, that, comparing the two institutions as they exist to-day, worst with worst, average with average, best with best, the Bible School does not suffer much in the comparison. One is led to think that the author of the criticism has not used this method of comparison. He must have had in mind good secular schools and very poor Bible Schools. By such a method one might justify some of the conclusions of this criticism. By way of defending his assertion of the antiquatedness of the Bible School, the author adds:

"The children meet in one large room, in the midst of endless confusion and distraction. For a parallel we would have to go to one of the old monitorial schools of England or to the Mohammedan University at Cairo."

But for all the classes of a Bible School to meet in one room is, to-day, the exception. Nearly all schools have at least two rooms, and most schools have several. The ideal is to isolate during the teaching period as many classes as possible. That there is distraction from the presence of a number of classes in the same room is true, but that this distraction is not so pronounced as might be expected is the verdict of the experience of many who have taught under these conditions.

But this condition is not distinctive of the Bible School to-day. Some day schools resort to it under the compulsion of necessity. We have known classes of fifty side by side in one room, separated by nothing but a curtain, to be compelled to work under these conditions for five hours in the schools of New York City, not so remote in time as the monitorial schools, nor in space as Cairo. Nor is this an accusation of the schools thus compelled to do some of their work. Nor does it reflect anything but credit on the Bible Schools that they, when so compelled, will undertake to do their work under difficulties. The very willingness

and consecration to a purpose represented in their working under these conditions become in a measure counteractors to the defects in conditions under which the work is done.

"The little ones wear their unaccustomed finery, their new hats and sashes, gloves and parasols (!). Imagine teaching arithmetic to children so arrayed."

Aside from the amusement that this will afford primary teachers in Bible Schools, the author raises the question of church or Sunday clothes. That they may become distracting factors to the wearer through discomfort or a desire to leave an impression of one's personality on those who may see, is quite beyond dispute. But that such distraction must necessarily and always result from the wearing of "Sunday" clothes by no means follows. Distraction and discomfort aside, there is a value to being well dressed that becomes an ally to those seeking to helpfully and positively touch young lives. Mrs. Bishop, in the Chautauqua Herald of some years ago, writes:

"It may never have occurred to some of

you, that dress has any reactionary influence upon the inner states, but so potent is this influence that frequently we can change the mental states by a change of dress. When tired, gloomy or fretful, a change in apparel often means a change in mood. . . Many actors say that to be dressed for the part is a great help toward feeling the part. . . . An army general once declared that he could not fight without his uniform, that an ordinary hat and coat took all the courage out of him."

The potency of dress is asserted by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps in the following epigram:

"The consciousness of clean linen is of itself a source of moral strength only second to that of a clean conscience."

The latter statement gives us guidance in determining what is meant by being ethically "well dressed." It is not a matter of the latest fashion; it is not a matter of the expensiveness of the material, of the exclusiveness of the pattern, of the "striking" effect upon others. These things, when a matter of conscious concern, cannot helpfully minister to

one's reverence and preparedness for the reception of spiritual and ethical truth. Being ethically well dressed is not a matter of wealth: it is as possible to the poor as to the rich.

It is not asserted that the ethically helpful consciousness of clean clothes must be obtrusive, so that children and adults must be clearly aware of the value attaching to them. Their value exists and is operative, whether it is distinctly recognized or not. But it seems to be unwarranted to assert that to make the appropriateness of clothes to an occasion a matter of consciousness will not add to the potency of the clothes in generating a mental attitude suitable to the occasion.

If it be true, as has been asserted, that children are not normally conscious of their clothes, that any such consciousness results from remarks made to them by their elders, then is it possible for the homes, by their comments and remarks, to make the clothesconsciousness positive and helpful, free from objectionable features, an ally to the earnest

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Dr. L. W. Flaccus, in Pedagogical Seminary, 1906.

efforts of the workers in the Bible School as they try to secure for the truths taught a favorable reception.

But nothing that is here said can be construed as an argument in favor of children wearing their hats and coats and "parasols" during the hour of the Bible School's session; as an argument in favor of ignoring the comfort of the children in dressing them for the Bible School or the church service. Discomfort is distraction, of necessity, and is to be avoided.

"At least nine-tenths, generally all, of the teachers are absolutely untrained."

That trained teachers are desirable for the work of the Bible School is a proposition we will all accept most heartily and prayerfully, as we feel the need of them. But that the case is as bad as this statement makes it appear is not probable. It seems to be true that a careful examination of the enrolled workers in the Bible School will reveal the fact that the fraction mentioned is too large, and that the adverb of degree used is too strong. Or

if this be denied, it may then be asserted that the author's conception of training is too narrow.

This assertion of the narrowness of the conception of training that lies back of this part of the criticism may be based on the fact that there is a difference between being familiar with the knowledge of a "secular" branch and being familiar with God's word. One may know the former, and for this knowledge be none the better fitted for the teaching of the branch. But this is scarcely possible with one who knows the Bible. In the very process of learning the things he knows he has been in contact with the very best teaching the world has ever seen. As they were taught originally, they were taught, most of them, by masters of teaching. The truths and the teaching of them are not dissociated. gets the method of the teaching at the same time that he is getting the things taught. This may often take place unconsciously, but none the less surely for that. It is because of this fact that we question the "absolutely untrained" characteristics of so large a proportion of Bible School workers as the author asserts.

In addition to the size of the fraction, the strength of the adverb and the narrowness of the conception of training, it may be said that this statement under consideration gives a far too prominent place to technical training, to professional equipment, desirable as this is, and significant as it may be made to be in the work of the Bible School. It, in itself, does not suffice. It is a case of "other things being equal," choose the trained teacher.

"They are almost universally good and kind and respectable, but they have never considered the way in which the child's mind works, and they are as unfitted for teaching as were the people who kept the dame schools of half a century ago."

Let us notice in inverse order the contents of this statement. The antiquatedness of the Bible School is here measured by fifty, instead of by seventy-five, as it was a few lines above.

In so far as one is ignorant of the ways of working of the child-mind, and possesses no

compensating features, that one is unfitted for teaching in any kind of school. We have seen that it is possible for this ignorance to be in a measure atoned for; that much of this knowledge may be gotten indirectly and unconsciously. It is not necessary that a law be consciously employed to derive from it its benefits. There are reasons for consciously using it in education. But if it is used, whether consciously or otherwise, it will work out its life effects. Nor is the mere possession of a knowledge of these things a sure guarantee that they will be used. Many a teacher knows how to teach better than he teaches. Better have a law obeyed in ignorance of its existence than to know of its existence and make no use of its potency. But the ideal is, of course, that the law be both known and used.

In the remaining part of this sentence we have a concession that, carried to its legitimate implications, will go far to atone for other defects in the teaching force of institutions wishing to helpfully touch life, rather than to merely inform the mind. Whittier's

"By his life alone, Gracious and sweet, the better way was shown,"

asserts the possibility of teaching by life, by conduct, by character. A number of recent pedagogical studies conspire to lay increasing emphasis upon the potency of teaching of this kind. And from the remote past we hear the same thing emphasized in—

"The road by precepts is tedious, by example short and straight."—Seneca.

The one unforgivable pedagogical blunder on the part of the Bible School is committed in allowing persons of immoral or questionable character to be enrolled among its teachers. It matters not what their professional or technical qualification may be, it cannot atone for this deficiency. But, on the other hand, strength of character, pure life, loyalty in the service of the Christ will go far, very far, toward compensating for professional deficiency. So far will it go towards such compensation that many who realize the value of professional equipment would have no hesitancy whatever in choosing a teacher whose character in reasonable degree measures up to

the standards of the Christ, though he had never heard of "normal training," as against one who had a splendid professional training, but whose life gave no proof of the indwelling of the Christ, no evidence of earnest, honest effort to shape the life after the standards of the cross. For even such effort on the part of a teacher does not fail to leave a helpful impress upon the lives of those being taught by the one making the effort. The following quotation from Professor Edward Howard Griggs asserts what may justly be characterized as the most profound fact of all pedagogy; a fact entirely ignored by the criticism under consideration; a fact that will abundantly repay any meditation a parent or a teacher, whether of "day" school or of Bible School, may give to it:

"We teach not only by what we do, but by what we try to do even when we fail. It is possible, fortunately, to teach lessons above the level of what we are in conduct, though not higher than what we want to be and strive to be. The ideal we are struggling towards teaches above our halting and struggling action. Thus children tend to imitate not only our conduct, but, deeper than it, the spirit that inspires our conduct.

... Thus, even though we may not dare to hope that our lives may be able to influence others through the 'contagion of a great soul' that is so supreme in education, still, in our sphere in home and in school, if we are devoted servants of ideals that lift away from the plane of merely selfish life, we may hope that, even in failure, some radiance of the ideal will flow from our spirit and touch the children we love into sane, sweet, earnest moral life."

One who accepts the doctrine of the essential sameness of mental functions in the different realms of mental activity will have no trouble in accepting this principle, here so forcefully expressed by Professor Griggs, and in applying it as a principle in religious nurture. It holds in the religious as in the moral realm; they are not separate and distinct realms. If they were, in both would the principle operate.

"When we come to the curriculum and

method the matter is even worse; there is little or no grading; at most, in nine Sunday-schools out of ten, we have the primary class, the Sunday-school proper, and the Bible class for adults. Imagine a day school where all the children were taught the same thing over and over for ten years."

That the problem of a proper adjustment of the material of the curriculum to the needs of the pupils of different stages of development is one not yet solved by the Bible School; and that, in the absence of a solution to this problem, curriculum errors are made is conceded most willingly. But splendid efforts have been made to solve the problem, and at the time of the writing of the criticism there existed curricula that at least were sufficiently meritorious to have justified one who knew of them to make an exception in their favor. Since then still further progress has been made. The International Committee on Lessons now frankly recognizes the fundamental principle of different material for the different development stages, as over against the formerly dominant and erroneous conception of different treatment

of the same material for the different grades of the school.

To say that "all the children were taught the same thing" is to speak in the light of the facts of Bible School procedure of a few years ago, with here and there an exception; but to add that they were taught this same thing "over and over for ten years" is to speak after one has exhausted his knowledge of the facts, and is too busy to take time to inquire for them. This condition of affairs was never characteristic of Bible School work, even when it concerned itself with teaching the art of spelling by the aid of illustrations: when h-a-t spelled "'stove-pipe', hat," and e-g-g, "Easter egg."

Were this criticism toned down considerably, diluted with a larger percentage of fairness, weakened by taking from it what appear to be the effects of a desire to paint a dark background upon which a contention could be thrown into strong relief, it would afford food for thought to Bible School workers intent on improving their work.

## VI.

WHY THE WEAKNESS?

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#### WHY THE WEAKNESS?1

The sub-divisions of our general theme remind one of three men, who for some reason or other have lost the power of muscular coordination, trying to walk abreast without in any way inconveniencing one another. Theirs is a difficult task under the conditions specified. So is ours as we attempt to consider this theme under these three captions without bumping into one another, without encroaching upon one another's territory. How welcome a spite fence would be!

Fortunately, we are able to give you an absolute, an exhaustive, though brief, answer to the question set for our stumbling. You need

¹ From program of the Pennsylvania State Sabbath School Association, in session in Philadelphia, October, 1905. Thursday afternoon, October 12th. "The Intermediate Department—Our Weak Spot." (a) Pupils from twelve to sixteen years, Rev. Forest E. Dager, Philadelphia, Pa. (b) Why the Weakness? Rev. A. B. Van Ormer, Norwood, Pa. (c) How to Strengthen. Marion Lawrance, Toledo, Ohio.

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not question the validity of the answer, you may rely upon it. And it gives one a peculiar pleasure to thus offer to Bible School workers something that is final, that is absolutely reliable.

Why the weakness? I do not know.

Furthermore, in this absolute way of answering a most vital question, *I do not know of any one who does know*. This is not the same as saying there is no one who does know. Of that one cannot be so sure. Some one may know all about it, the cause and the working out of that cause into the effect we are deploring. Then, too, there may be some who think they know.

But in this "thinking we know" is to be found an element of danger in our Bible School work; especially so, now, as we stand at a constructive stage of our work, ready to build anew, or to remodel the former structure, as we may be advised to do. "Thinking we know" and "cock-sureness" are near akin. The latter may be described as a compound made up of a little experience inadequately reflected upon and unintelligently questioned;

a wishing that things might be and the inference on this basis that they can be and should be; a brooding upon some theory that has flashed into the mind with all the peculiar charm attaching to theories that are "all our own"; a complacency with things as they are that resents any suggested innovation—these elements may enter into the compound in different proportions. But the compound, whatever the proportion of its elements, is at best very unreliable. There is great danger in being too sure; there always is.

In view of the absence of definite, specific, broadly foundationed and adequately verified teachings as to the weakness, the duty of the Bible School seems to be a plain one. It should study the problem. It is true that much indifference as to such things, as to efforts to discover truth bearing directly on the work of the Bible School is to be found on the part of the Bible School workers. But it is now possible to find much interest in the results of such work, and even in the carrying on of the work. Many have been willing to give sufficient of their time to enable them to

co-operate with efforts seeking to more adequately comprehend the problem of religious nurture.

It would seem to be a legitimate corollary that in the study of the problem before us the Bible School should be our laboratory, rather than the laboratory for psychological research—much as we owe to the latter. Our problem ought to be attacked at first hand by persons willing and able to carry on investigations.

Nor should our investigators be entirely without a brief. The boast of science is the absence of the brief. But one cannot read carefully between the lines of many a recent scientific production on lines akin to our own, without getting the impression that the action belies the profession. The brief can be seen, and it is often for unbelief. The intense scientific zeal for truth is often commingled with a personal equation of unbelief that makes thoroughly untrustworthy conclusions issued as truth. The mere desire to be "scientific" seems at times to be discoverable as a warping influence in some of the studies and conclusions that have to do with our work.

We would have our investigators previously committed to the great facts of a possibility of and a necessity for religious nurture; would have them regard this as a supreme duty of adulthood to immature life; would have them spend their energies in seeking to find how we can best achieve this nurture—how follow the line of least resistance and avoid detrimental effects from our attempts at helpfulness.

But, speaking conjecturally, there are some things to be said in answer to our question.

We do not find the weakness explained by the fact of the imperfection of our system of artificial appeals and stimulation. We sometimes act as if the trouble were here. We invent, advertise, and, alas! use various devices whereby an artificial stimulation entirely dissociated from any of the real work of the Bible School is secured. We have prizes, banners, rewards, diplomas, seals, and episeals, to the nauseation of those who have any comprehension of the vital function of our work.

These very things, it is conceivable, may result ultimately in disgust with the system that relies upon them or extensively employs them in its efforts to hold young people in the Bible School and the Church. Should such disgust arise in any young soul, it is an evidence of a healthy condition, and one that makes lasting influence possible. Too long have we been thinking too much of these things, and been thinking too little of the vital things in our work. We have been commissioned to distribute bread and not stones; to generate altruism, rather than to studiously develop egoism, though the latter is the easier procedure.

Let us not, then, seek the cause of the weakness in ways that may increase the weakness, or augment the harm done by us even when we seek to do good. Let us rather seek the cause of the weakness under consideration in terms of things that are more fundamental and that are of necessity vital facts of the Bible School organization.

May it not be possible that our failure to adequately recognize and provide for the growing personality of the pupils has contributed to the weakness? Ought there not be more of a differentiation for the several ages of the pupils than is afforded by the differently colored quarterlies, or even by an "adaptation treatment" of the lesson material?

Might not the curriculum of the Bible School be enriched so as to include Christian biography, from whatever period chosen? At the stage of life when boys and girls are most in need of materials suitable for the making of life ideals, could not the Bible School furnish much of such material from the life-stories of those who have loved and served, sacrificed and suffered for, the Christ? The Bible would remain the core of the curriculum. These lives are but an objective, impersonated presentation of the Bible's truths. Nor would this enrichment need to stop at biography. There is possible a co-ordination of literature with Bible School work that, it seems, might be made to appeal to those whom we lose at the very age at which we should expect them to enter into the King's service.

Along with this need of curriculum enrichment, may it not be that a failure to recognize the appearance of the age of reasoning, of wanting to see some of the hidden relations

of things, may help to explain our weakness? True it is that the mystery of godliness is great, and that much of the vital truth to be taught passes our powers of comprehension. But this same wall of mystery is all about us, wherever we go; science, if it does anything, increases, rather than dispels it for us. The Duke of Argyle points out an experience common to many, when he speaks of the sense of mystery:

"The sense of mystery which is sometimes so oppressive to us, and which is never more oppressive than when we try to fathom and understand some of the commonest questions affecting our own life and nature. . . ." 1

Being surrounded thus by mystery, so far as ultimate relations hold, is no more an excuse for denying to youth an opportunity of reacting mentally upon proximate spiritual relations and facts than it is for denying to them an opportunity of reacting upon proximate natural relations and facts.

The facts of the revelation of God to us
""Unity of Nature," page 186.

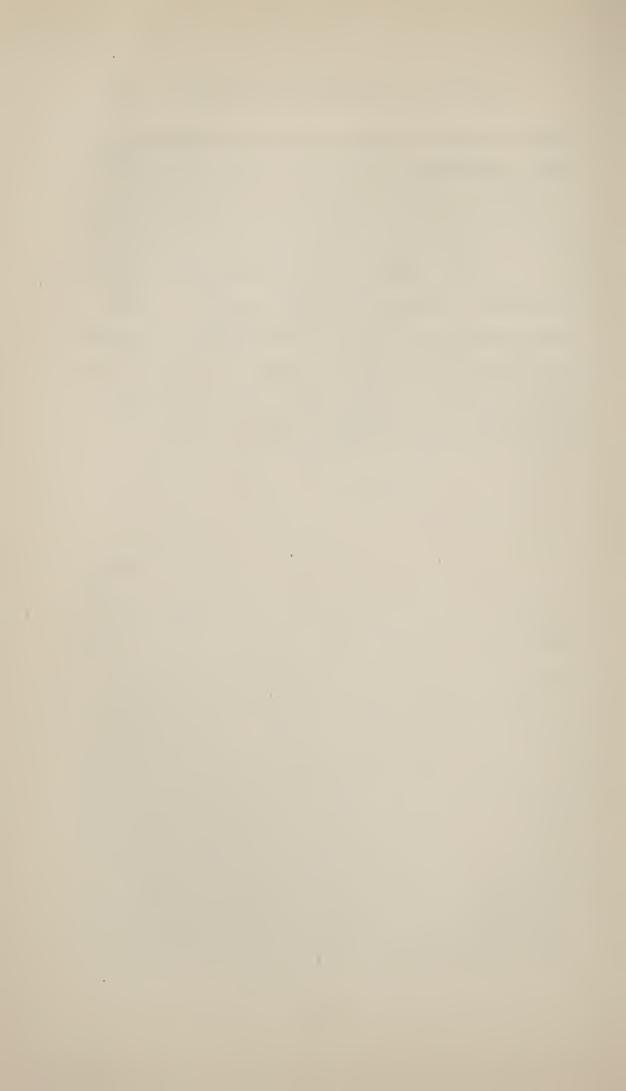
afford abundant opportunity for reasoning and reflection—a process that is attractive to adolescents. The realm of application of truth to life and its many problems affords excellent chance for appeal to this growing mental function. Classes of young people thus led to react upon material presented are likely to be classes that will find the Bible School interesting long after classes merely lectured to have disintegrated, with a consequent loss to the school and the Church.

The weakness may be partly accounted for by the divorcement of Church activities from many of the interests of life. Were the Church, with the fellowship of her members, to provide for social, physical, intellectual refreshment and development—were she to take back to herself the function she has so completely relegated to other institutions, might we not then find her hold on the young much more secure than it now is?

One cannot talk other than tentatively of it as yet. But can we not assert that a divorcement between the religious professions of parents and their home lives, their business and social interests, seems to empty of all attractiveness for many a young life the concept of religion, and thus contributes to an alienation from things that are religious, that are under the direction of the Church?

Who can assert that the absence of adults from the Bible School is not a large factor in the loss of adolescents? To expect to hold the young for the Bible School when it is shunned by the mature, is as difficult a task as is that of getting collegians to enter into the spirit of a chapel service at which the faculty is conspicuous because of its absence. Why should we thus fly in the face of the great law of social imitation? Shall the Church expect adolescents to show a state of grace which will enable them, as they go to the Bible School, to stumble over the feet of "Sunday-supplement"-reading parents; or shall it demand that the "supplementers" themselves shall go to the Bible School-for the sake of the youth, if not for their own spiritual needs?

There may be another factor in the weakness. Does the Bible School find enough for its members to do, by way of acting out the truths that are taught? Have we been wise to the significance of action upon a truth or a principle? Have we pondered carefully the fact that the wise man, who built on character-rock, was the man who heard and did the words? Should we not provide in as large measure as possible for this doing, thus at once making the Bible School a center of usefulness in the community, and a means of growth through exercise to its members?



## VII.

BIBLE SCHOOL WORK AND CHILD-STUDY.



## BIBLE SCHOOL WORK AND CHILD-STUDY.

What shall be the aim of the Bible School? To this question we might expect a substantial agreement of answers; but our expectations are disappointed as we look into the recent literature of Bible School work.

Two main tendencies are to be discovered. One tendency would make of the Bible School an institution for the teaching of mere morality, dissociated from any religious teaching.¹ The other tendency lays so much emphasis on the teaching of religious truths, that there is left but little, if any, room for a helpful touching of the moral life.²

With the former of these two contentions we have little to do. It will appeal to a class of people. But to persons who accept the great commission of Jesus Christ it will present nothing in self-commendation. The teach-

<sup>1</sup> Sheldon's "Ethical Culture Sunday School."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Brown, "Sunday School Movements in America." (115)

ing of morality, with the elimination of the chief dynamic of morality from the teaching, is a vocation unworthy of those intent upon the King's service.

The contention that it is desirable to restrict the work of the Bible School to the development of the spiritual nature of the child, to the exclusion of the moral, is one that will have many conflicts before it can win the field. For, however learnedly and zealously it may be contended for, it overlooks the fundamental fact that religious teaching, to be effective, must not be dissociated from the affairs of every-day life. It is the man who wills to do God's will who really and permanently comes to "know of the doctrine." This contention overlooks the significance to the religious life of ethical habituation, the philosophy of which offers the most satisfactory explanation of backsliding obtainable, explains the refusal of many to enter the King's service, and accounts in some measure for the uphilliness of religious work. To refuse to the Bible School the privilege of touching and of trying to touch the moral natures of children, is to make impossible a putting of religious instruction on the plane of the experiences of the children. To deny this privilege to the Bible School is to compel it to concern itself with the theoretical and metaphysical affairs of theology—a thing absurd, so long as the Bible School works with children.

If, however, we should grant this contention in theory, such conditions as are now found by the Bible School render its acceptance in practice impossible. The Bible School must include the moral development of children in its aim. If it does not do this, there are many lives into which the moral may never enter. For many are the homes to-day that are entirely unable to touch their children in a morally uplifting way—the fault not resting with the children. Many are the homes whose touch makes for a negative morality. Many, too, are the homes whose indirect influence counteracts direct efforts that are made to secure moral conduct on the part of the children. Turning to the public schools, we find them professing to attend to the moral development of children; but

in reality the work of the schools is so intensely intellectual, that in many of them the atmosphere is, in some respects, almost immoral. At least, it falls far short of the altruistic atmosphere which is generated where the religion of the King is taught in its purity. Thus, the home and the school often fail to touch helpfully the moral nature of children. For this failure it is the privilege of the Bible School to atone. To the end that this atonement may be made, we believe that the Bible School must include in its aim, as an important part of it, the helpful touching of the moral nature of children. The chief aim of the Bible School, the aim to which all others must be subordinated, is that of a development of the moral and of the religious natures of children that shall result in better living and in a surrender of self to the service of Jesus Christ.

That the Bible School in but a small measure atones for the neglect of home and public school, is known to no one better than to those interested in the Bible School. It needs few, if any, of the unsympathetic

criticisms that have been made of its work. There is ground for criticisms of its work. Yet a study of much of the adverse criticism shows that the critics expect Bible School work to advance with strides befitting a Hiawatha, removing obstacles as by a blow from his magical mittens. This is an unjust expectation. Such advance has never been seen in educational thought and practice. Slow has been the process by which many of our present educational truths have won acceptance. comparison with the movements of development in educational history, the development in Bible School thought and practice does not suffer seriously. To a candid mind, the Bible School of to-day is not, as has been recently asserted, "fifty years behind the day." it, as the public school, has not yet reached the condition of perfection.

The Bible School of to-day sets before itself one of the world's great problems, that of leading a child into full manhood or womanhood consecrated to Jesus Christ, and ready for service in His name. In its effort to solve this problem, it claims the privilege of getting help from any available source; and, in the exercise of this privilege, it has turned hopefully to childstudy, that movement that more than any other characterizes the educational thought of the opening years of the twentieth century.

The child-study movement, as we know it, dates from the year 1881, when Professor Preyer, gave to the world the results of his patient, painstaking, laborious study of one of his children. Children had been systematically studied long before this; but never so much so as now. Never was there so much interest shown in the results of the study. From this time on study after study was made. With increasing frequency, and in several languages, reports of studies appeared. To-day, the literature of the subject is voluminous, the product of some of the world's most scientific minds. In this literature there is much that is of permanent value, much that is helpful. To this literature the Bible School looks for help.

It is easily possible for it to err in its expectation of help from child-study literature. It is possible to expect an unreasonable amount of help, and it is possible that some tinge of chagrin may be felt when it is seen that child-study may not have much to give that is new. Let us not expect too much; for child-study labors under great disadvantages. Let us not expect all its statements to be new; for children have been observed by adults since children have been coming, with their blessings, into the lives of men.

The Bible School looks to child-study for help. Reasonably does it do so.

For, there is a growing conviction in the minds of educational thinkers that there are laws of growth and development, spiritual and moral, as well as intellectual and physical, which must be recognized by those who would deal effectually and intelligently with the growing child. They believe that there are conditions that favor and facilitate growth; that there are conditions that interfere with and prevent growth. The idea that development is a haphazard process, uncontrolled by law, no longer holds the "bad eminence" it once held—though it still lurks in an occasional dark corner. Dr. Oppenheim speaks

of "definite laws of development" that "act just as steadily and ruthlessly as the laws of gravitation, of the conservation of energy." Few persons can be found who will call for a demonstration of the facts here asserted.

It is to the study of these laws that childstudy devotes its efforts. If, then, any branch of investigation is prepared to speak helpfully on the matter of the development of human nature along moral and spiritual lines, that branch of investigation ought to be child-study.

Possibly the most fundamental fact that child-study teaches us, a fact that is entering more and more into educational practice, whether in public school or in Bible School, is the fact of the existence of a difference between child-nature and adult-nature. This fact is strenuously insisted on, and is a vitalizing principle in child-training. It has important implications for Bible School work.

The formerly-held notion of child-nature regarded the child as essentially similar to the adult, differing only in "experience, knowledge, and strength." This being the case, the way to know how to treat children

was to study carefully the operations of the adult mind, and to deduce from this study the desired rules of procedure. This older notion regarded the child as developing "in a straight line from infancy to maturity" at a uniform rate, and as requiring at all the stages of its development practically the same conditions of growth. What a seven-year old child required was required, too, by a younger and an older child, save that a diluting or a condensing of the treatment was allowed, to meet the differences in experience, knowledge, and strength.

The newer notion, the one taught by child-study, and the one the Bible School must adopt—has adopted in many instances—no longer regards the child as a "little man or woman." On the contrary, he is distinct from the adult, and passes through several stages of development, each of which is distinct from the adult stage, as well as from each of the other stages, and requires a treatment different in kind rather than in degree from the treatment of the other stages. His development, at times very rapid, at others

slow, is apt to occur in a zigzag line, by fits and starts, now following one line of interest, now another. This newer notion thinks that the child should be treated in the light of a study of his own nature rather than in that of a study of adult nature.

A little reflection shows how divergent must be the practices based on these two ways of viewing children. When Charles Dickens made Dr. Blimber say to Mr. Dombey, who had brought his young son to the "educational hothouse," kept by Dr. Blimber, "We'll make a man of him," he gave expression to the "little man" idea of education. We are led to think he intended this to be contemptuous. For, when he made Paul Dombey look into the face of Dr. Blimber and say, "Please, sir, I'd rather be a child," he put into literature its most pathetic and profound appeal against the custom of short-circuiting childhood into maturity. The early stages are important factors in the development of succeeding ones. True maturity comes only after a full and free growth in each of the earlier stages. Parents, public school and Bible School teachers are slowly learning the lesson of the importance of the tadpole's tail to the development of the frog. Out of, through, and by means of these earlier stages must the child grow into maturity. To this full maturity each stage makes a contribution, losing in the process of development those traits that so much worry parents or teachers, who believe in having children act as if they were little men and women. There seems to be much truth in Lowell's lines:

"From lower to the higher next,

Not to the top, is Nature's text;

And embryo good, to reach full stature,

Absorbs the evil in its nature."

If this view of childhood is correct, changes must be made in much of our treatment of children. If this view is correct, we should be careful as to how we hold adult standards before the children. If this view is correct, there is much work to be done by way of getting clearer views of the nature of those with whom we work. If this view is correct, how noble, how exalted the work of the Bible School workers!



## VIII.

THE DOCTRINE OF INTEREST.



## THE DOCTRINE OF INTEREST.

Does the Bible School aim to secure a "development of the moral and of the religious natures of children that shall result in better living and in a surrender of self to the service of Jesus Christ"? How, then, shall it proceed to a realization of this aim? However the answers that various Bible School workers would give to this question might differ, they would, doubtless, all emphasize one fact, that of the necessity for the use of the Bible in the work of the Bible School. The agreement that would be found in these answers makes unnecessary any attempt to demonstrate the supremacy of the Bible in the curriculum of the Bible School.

The Bible School must teach the Bible's truths. They must be taught to the child (all pupils). Here are the two elements in our problem. How shall we relate them, combine them, give the former to the latter? No answer can claim completeness that ignores in-

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terest as a fundamental condition of our teaching the Bible's truths to the pupils of the classes. If we merely seek to have the child retain the truths taught, if we are satisfied when we, by a few questions, discover that the truths have been retained, when the truth can be written out and exchanged for tickets or percentages or for a certificate of promotion to a higher grade—if we seek no more than this, we must needs reckon with interest. And, if we are concerned about things more significant than the mere retention of material and want to so present the truths we teach that they shall work out for morality and piety in the lives of those taught, our reckoning must still be with interest—an absolutely necessary condition of retention, of recollection, of helpful permanency in a pupil's life. Without interest the gate to the citadel of child-life is hopelessly barred to any subject-matter we would have admitted.

In passing, let us refer to a frequently overlooked factor that makes for a lack of interest, with its attendant circumstances of restlessness, inattention and deafness to the truth that is presented. This overlooked factor is the ever-present, always-operative physical factor. Some are disposed to treat this factor as unworthy of consideration. Wise teachers in all schools know its paramount importance. Impurity of the atmosphere, an abnormally high or low temperature of the room, physical discomfort arising from an unadjusted seat, the fatigue resulting from prolonged and unparticipated-in opening exercises, the lighting of the room, the "sitting still" that many schools require, the crowding of the class; some, or all, of these may contribute to the low tide of interest that makes a settling into the sands of indifference and inattention likely to occur at any time.

Approaching the doctrine of interest from the practical side, it may be said to have three distinct stages of development. At the present time, by different persons, we find all these stages believed in. Some persons have grown through the first two into the third. Some are still in the first stage; some in the second. There is a conservatism that keeps many from

accepting the third, that makes them employ interest in only the first two stages of the doctrine. Yet it is with the third stage that child-study has to deal. It is here that the literature of child-study is prolific of help and of suggestion.

In the first stage of the doctrine there is a strong conviction as to the significance of interest as a factor in the teaching process. This conviction has crystalized into the practical guide, "Make your work interesting." But this precept is found to be as confusing to those who really want help as would be a finger-board at the intersection of many roads if it merely read, "One of these roads leads to Blank."

The breadth of this precept has given freedom to the inventive instinct of humanity, which, believing that interest is an external thing and has nothing to do, of necessity, with the subject-matter in hand, save to create a reason for enduring its presentation, has given us a most interesting array of devices, whereby work can be "made interesting." In the fertile soil of this precept a rank growth

of expedients and devices is found, and in many a day school, and Bible School as well, the work of education is largely reduced to the work of cultivating and applying these devices.

But the interest thus secured is no guarantee of the occurrence of an educative process. On the contrary there is a danger connected with this phase of interest against which every teacher should scrupulously guard. It has been truly written that when there is a high degree of interest awakened by external devices we may suspect the teaching to be dead and formal. And the significant fact is that this death and formality in the teaching process is likely to be induced by the effort to excite external interest, is causatively related to the devices relied upon by the teachers. Basedow with his cookie alphabet and the primary teacher with her "hearts, ladders, crosses, crowns, and blackboard intricacies," have the same task—that of not distracting the mind from the truth to be taught to the symbol or illustration intended as a conveyor of truth. The task is difficult.

It is to be feared that some of the work done in the Bible School does not rise above this conception of interest. The paraphernalia of many a primary room speaks of the reign of this idea that makes interest "an external contrivance to persuade the pupil to endure the subject being taught."

A second stage of the doctrine of interest is the stage that Herbart and his followers have strongly contended for. This stage, like the former, emphasizes the significance, the necessity of interest in any effort to teach. unlike the former, this view does not rely on external devices to secure interest—an interest that will "persuade the pupil to endure the subject being taught." This second view regards interest as a result as well as a condition of teaching. It holds that the proper teaching of a subject must create an interest in the subject; and, conversely, that a lack of interest in a subject argues an improper teaching of the same. It was Pestalozzi, "that wisest of schoolmasters," a man from whom Herbart learned much, who wrote:

"There are scarcely any circumstances

in which a want of application in children does not proceed from a want of interest; and there are, perhaps, none under which a want of interest does not originate in the mode of treatment adopted by the teacher. I would go so far as to lay it down as a rule, that whenever children are inattentive, and apparently take no interest in a lesson, the teacher should always first look to himself [his manner of presentation?] for a reason."

According to this stage of the doctrine any subject can be presented to children in such a way as to create an interest in the same, if the subject is one that can be related to the children's experiences. If the subject admits of an interpretation in terms of things already known by the children, and is so presented as to be interpreted by what they already know, interest will result, with all its attendant benefits to retention and recollection, with its accompanying desire to look into the matter further, with its thrill of pleasure arising from the fact that the mind has been making a conquest, has enlarged its realm, expanded its kingdom, and made new facts its subjects.

This stage of the doctrine has given us a practical precept that is more definite and directive and helpful than the one of the preceding stage. This precept has been variously stated. "Proceed from the known to the unknown," some say. Others improve upon this by saying, "to the related unknown." However the precept may be stated, it calls upon us to couple to the train of the child's experiences the new matter we wish to present, and to secure this coupling by means of some element common to both the old and the new material. If this is done the new soon becomes old and familiar, and moves off as a part of the train of mental life. The coupling process is accompanied by interest.

Two observations should here be made in referring to this fundamental principle of teaching—a principle worthy of a treatment sufficiently exhaustive to admit of numerous concrete illustrations of its use in the teaching process.

The first of these observations tells us of the duty placed upon the teachers of acquainting themselves with the contents of the children's

experiences. This is an absolute condition—one that is often unfulfilled. Herein is the secret of our failure to interest, to create an interest that shall become our helper and friend in our effort to touch child-life.

The second of the observations is of a cautionary nature. It is becoming customary to use an "approach," or "starting point" to the lesson containing the truth to be taught. This is well. But there is need of care that in using these we do not miss the spirit while retaining the letter of the second stage of the doctrine of interest. The story which so frequently constitutes the "approach" or "starting point," may nicely pave the way to the But the story that is told demands that it itself be properly related to the experiences of the child in order that it may be understood. The mere telling of a story that introduces the lesson nicely is not necessarily a satisfying of the conditions of interest. On the other hand, it may be a positive detriment, preventing the comprehension of the lesson by introducing unrelated elements. The "point of contact" is to be found in the

child's experience, not given to him in a story that does not properly relate itself to his experience. There may be many times when the story approach is injurious, when a free conversation with the children is much to be preferred by way of preparing for the truth to be presented. There are "approaches" and approaches.

The last of the three stages of the doctrine of interest has come to us largely as the result of the enthronement of the child in the educational realm.

This stage ignores the first stage, but fully grants the validity and usefulness of the second stage. It leaves, almost entirely, to the second stage the question of method and takes as its own special problem the question of the material that must be used in an effort to assist the child in reaching his fullest development.

The third is more complex than either of the other stages, and because of this complexity it lays no claim to finality, to having spoken the last word upon the subject of interest. It insists vigorously, however, upon the validity of the several elements that enter into its complex nature. It has assured itself that it is moving in the right direction in its search for what is permanent and serviceable in educational thought and practice. It believes that when the final solution of the educational problem will have been reached, its teachings will be retained as no insignificant part of the then accepted body of educational truth.

The following elements may be said to enter into the conception of interest as held by those who accept the third stage of the doctrine of interest:

- 1. Children's interests lie naturally along certain general lines.
- 2. These lines vary with the growth and development reached by children, every child passing through these several successive lines in the course of his development.
- 3. These lines of interest, not being the result of education, are regarded as an expression of the needs of the developing children. As such they become, in part, determinative in the choice of the material to be

given to children in the several stages of growth.

- 4. Material adapted to the interests of the several stages of growth lends itself most easily and effectually to educative processes.
- 5. The teacher should study the special interests of pupils in the light of the general interests of children. This study should guide one in the work of teaching.

The following postulates are tentatively offered to this statement of the elements of the conception of interest in its third stage:

- 1. The lines of interest may be satisfied by material that is morally indifferent—making for morality or for immorality.
- 2. The doctrine of interest has, therefore, no voice upon the question of the moral quality of the material that shall be offered children.

If this postulate be accepted it becomes evident that the doctrine of interest is not supreme and unlimited by other principles. It is not a self-sufficient principle in the work of either the secular school or of the Bible School. It is not adequate to the determination of

what is to be presented to children. It has been said, "The law of interest tells us what shall not be placed before the children," 1 things that are not interesting. But this is not a sufficiently comprehensive statement. It tells us some things that are not to be given. There are other things that are to be kept from children, and these things are from the class of interesting things. The complete guide, in terms of interest, to material to be presented would read: Give the children only interesting material, though

"not everything that is interesting, and not anything just because it is interesting." 1

But this leaves us in need of a criterion other than that of interest to be used in conjunction with interest in Bible School curriculum construction. Ethical and religious standards supply this needed and additional criterion.

3. Our hope is in the fact that moral material satisfies the demands of interest as well as immoral material does.

<sup>1 &</sup>quot;Picture Work," W. L. Hervey, page 83.

This view of interest, if accepted as a guiding principle in education, will both antagonize and be antagonized.

It antagonizes several notions, which often manifest themselves in theory and in practice.

(1) It antagonizes that whole educational attitude that would approach the child from the standpoint of the adult; that would use the molds of adult life and standards and interests in dealing with children. (2) It antagonizes the tendency to select material from a logical or from a chronological standpoint, whether in religious or in secular education. (3) It antagonizes, too, the belief that only that which is more or less distasteful and uninteresting has real worth in education, such things being valuable because of the moral culture that comes from working upon them (!).

No one of these three antagonized propositions has any longer a respectable standing in educational thought; each struggles to live, but its struggles are less and less vigorous. Soon the gravestones of these propositions will be as milestones on the road of educational progress.

But this view has been antagonized. The analogy of the child's "wanting only dessert" has been invoked against it. It is probable that the view could defend itself against this argument if it should be shown that the analogy is seriously relevant. Under the caption, "A Pedagogical Heresy," this view of interest is censured and held up to ridicule. The writer of the article suggests no substitute for the principle he would remove. We would need to go back to the "adult standard" or wander in the darkness of experiment. Ten years have passed since the article on "A Pedagogical Heresy" appeared. In this time the view of interest there antagonized has won almost universal acceptance.

In 1890 Alfred Binet made the pioneer movement in the systematic study of children's interests. But long before Prof. Binet's study appeared we find the main contention of the third stage of the doctrine of interest clearly set forth by Herbert Spencer. He says:

"At each age the intellectual life which a child likes is a healthful one for it; and conversely. There is a spreading opinion that the rise of an appetite for any kind of knowledge implies that the unfolding mind has become fit to assimilate it and needs it for the purposes of growth."

Again, as a reason for relinquishing a course of procedure that produces no interest, or less interest than another course, he says:

"... For a child's intellectual instincts are more trustworthy than our reasonings."

These sentiments have been unqualifiedly accepted by many eminent workers upon the problem of the developing child. Prof. Binet was followed by Profs. Barnes and Shaw, who made similar studies. Since then studies of various lines of children's interests have multiplied.

Recent writers who concern themselves with the problem of the material that should enter the curriculum base their work upon this view of interest as a fundamental principle. The words, "based on the psychology of the child," as they appear in the title of a recent French work by Paul Lacombe, show plainly the prominence he gives to the child. His book is a plea for the recognition of the interests of children. Prof. James says:

"Begin with the line of his native interests, and offer him objects that have some immediate connection with these."

Both the second and third stages of interest find expression in this statement.

Professor Dewey holds that

"Only through the continual and sympathetic observation of childhood's interests can the adult enter into the child's life and see what it is really ready for, and upon what material it could work most readily and fruitfully."

Professor Dawson, after citing seventeen distinct studies of children's interests, says:

"It is evident, therefore, that the principle of interest has the sanction of scientific research, and that it is rapidly becoming a standard for estimating the material of instruction."

In Prof. Charles McMurry's "General Method" we read the following:

"The neglect to take proper cognizance of this principle of interest in laying out courses of study and in the manner of presenting subjects, is certainly one of the gravest charges that ever can be brought against the schools."

Here, again, we find the second and the third stages contended for.

In spite of this consensus of opinion and conviction, the third stage may be "a pedagogical heresy." If so, there will be a great conflagration when the heretics are burned, and among those consumed by the conflagration will be found many Bible School teachers, faithful workers, alert for the helpful voice of recent thought, yet accepting nothing merely because it is recent.

The present is, however, not alone in the recognition of this principle. With this it is as with other educational principles. They have been emphasized in the past by some educational thinker or thinkers, either theoretically or practically recognized, and have then been lost sight of for a period of time. The present revives these strans of thought, studies them carefully, states them clearly, puts them to practical tests, and, having satisfied itself of their validity and utility, permanently weaves them into the educational fabric. So has it

really been with this conception of interest with which we are now concerned. It underlies the best educational thought of the past, and consciously or unconsciously, it has helped to form and direct that which is best in the past. In educational, as in other lines, there are few new things, after all.

What shall be our attitude to the doctrine of interest? In which of the stages shall we consent to rest? Shall we refuse to let ourselves grow into the third stage? There are tendencies that would keep us from so doing. They are dangerous. Conservatism may be disastrous if it leads us to close our eyes to truth.

We have said that no claim is made to having said the last word, to having found the last fact bearing on this doctrine of interest. This is true. There is much to be done. The beginning has been made, and but little more. But the beginning has marked out the direction of the later work. The realm of children's interests must be carefully studied, studied repeatedly. These interests must be charted carefully, to the end that sailing

directions may be more definite. In this work that remains to be done we can become helpers, should become such, for the sake of the children in the Bible Schools. There are studies that Bible School workers should make, that they can make even better than can those who are not closely identified with the Bible School.

## IX.

CHILDREN'S INTERESTS IN THE BIBLE.



# CHILDREN'S INTERESTS IN THE BIBLE.

If we accept the contentions of the third stage of the Doctrine of Interest, we are brought at once to a consideration of the material that shall be employed in the curriculum of the Bible School.

We have seen that this is to be, almost exclusively, Bible material. Interest does not tell us this. The necessity imposed alike by the demands of child-nature and by the aim of the Bible School forces us to this conclusion. The child is capable of moral and of religious development, of coming to a personal, saving faith in Jesus Christ. To assist in this process is the great function of the Bible School. The material required for this process can be found nowhere else than in the Book of God's own writing. This Book reveals what no other literature can set forth, save as it does so by the help of the Bible.

Yet we have deliberately used "almost ex(151)

clusively." · For it seems that it is both possible and desirable to get aid from literature in our appeal to the child, and to so use some things in literature as to cause them to interpret portions of the word, to hold vividly before the pupils ideals that objectify teachings of the Bible. It seems that there are times when portions of literature can be used by way of having the pupils exercise their powers of ethical judgment, thus employing material studied in the Bible School. It is not undesirable that many children be allowed to see the prominence the Bible has been given in literature, how very much literature is indebted to the Bible. All this is made worthy our serious thought by the devitalizing way in which literature is treated, if treated at all, in some of the public school work of the day.

The Bible being our chief and almost exclusive source of material, any material from literature being largely supplementary, what shall be the principle that shall guide us in choosing from the varied material presented in this most wonderful Book? We are disposed to say that this principle is that of the

general interests of children as they shall be learned by careful and painstaking observation.

There seems to be nothing that can reasonably compete with this principle of curriculum formation. Several plans have been tried and have done memorable service. But these are vulnerable where this principle is not. They are tinged largely with the adult point of view. They emphasize chronology, or logical arrangement or classification. Or they lay stress upon covering the entire Bible in a specified time. An indefensible postulate seems to underlie these plans. This postulate says that any portion of Scripture is as serviceable as any other portion for the purpose of stimulating and nourishing the moral and religious growth of children, regardless of their age. The Bible itself refutes this postulate.

In I Peter ii. 2, we read:

"As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word."

Here we have a very plain assertion of the need of different food for different stages of growth in the spiritual life, the assertion clothing itself in terms of the food for the several stages of the physical life. In the

"I have fed you with milk and not with meat"

of I Cor. iii. 2, we have the same truth set forth by another writer, who employs the same physical analogy. When we turn to Hebrews we find the author employing in more detail the same analogy to teach the same fact.—Heb. v. 12-14. Here we really have granted, embryonically, it may be, the principle that is striving to-day for recognition at the hands of the religious teaching world.

This postulate, which seems to us to be indefensible, has a word or two to say to us. It is either true or false. In either case an argument for the use of interest is obtained. If the postulate is false, the field is left to the principle of interest; for it would be able soon to rout logic and chronology. A few minutes' bombardment of those principles by a battery throwing facts against them would suffice for their defeat in the absence of this postulate. On the contrary, if this postulate be true, we

are by it assured of the perfect safety with which we may attempt to employ interest. No matter what material we choose, it can be made as serviceable as any other. Under this second supposition the question for us to answer is whether or not any improvement upon the present status of things is possible or desirable.

It should be noted that the principle of interest in its working out will provide for logical arrangement and systematic study, ultimately and in so far as these are desirable.

There is the possibility of our granting to interest the ruling place in curriculum formation, and, despite this, by being mistaken as to the portions of the Bible that really interest and appeal to the several stages of growth, not reaching any higher ground than that now occupied. "We all know that the New Testament is the child's part of the Bible," wrote a teacher sometime ago. This statement results from a hasty generalization, or from a preconception that has not troubled about the facts. It has a basis in fact, but contains much more of error than it does of truth. There is an early interest in the New

Testament; but it is in a very restricted part of it. Those parts that have to do with the birth and temple appearance of Jesus, those parts that are emphasized by the Church festivals of Easter and Christmas, parts that art has so exclusively attended to, are the parts of the New Testament that children are most interested in and that lead us, when unguarded, to a hasty inference as to the value for children of New Testament material.

We must free ourselves from the effect of preconceptions born of our adult interests, from the effects of hasty generalizations, and give ourselves to a careful, painstaking study of children's interests, if we would fairly and adequately test this principle of interest, if we would intelligently apply this principle that is being crowned in the realm of secular education.

A beginning along this line has already been made by Prof. George E. Dawson, who has published the results of his study in the July, 1900, issue of the *Pedagogical Seminary*. He found the following percentages of preferences for the respective Testaments at the ages indicated:

#### NEW TESTAMENT.

Boys, 8 years, 60 per cent.; 14 years, 32 per cent.; 20 years, 90 per cent.

Girls, 8 years, 72 per cent.; 12 years, 40 per cent.; 20 years, 97 per cent.

#### OLD TESTAMENT.

Boys, 8 years, 40 per cent.; 13 years, 63 per cent.; 20 years, 12 per cent.

Girls, 8 years, 28 per cent.; 12 years, 46 per cent.; 20 years, 3 per cent.

Interpreting these figures, Prof. Dawson concludes:

"It is probable that the typical boy or girl from nine to fourteen years is more attached to the Old Testament than to the New."

He makes allowances in reaching this conclusion, for the influences already referred to that emphasize some parts of the New Testament. In addition to these he holds that the percentage of preference for the New Testament at eight and nine years are higher because of the fact that adults prefer the New Testament, and, in one way or another, force this preference on children, thus creating an

interest that is not spontaneous. The figures show clearly a growing interest in the New Testament from thirteen and fourteen years for boys and from twelve years for girls.

This growing interest in New Testament material is shown elsewhere in the study. In the choice of Bible books boys from thirteen years and girls from twelve years show a rapidly increasing preference for the Gospels, the books that graphically present Jesus. This interest in New Testament material is but one of several pregnant facts of adolescence.

Instead, then, of all knowing "that the New Testament is the child's part of the Bible," we are led to believe that the reverse is true. Emphasis is given to this revision of opinion by the results of the study, made in 1901, of the teaching of the crucifixion lesson.

Pre-judging this study's teachings, we would have looked for a preponderance of New Testament material in the expressed preferences

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Under the auspices of the Primary and Junior Council of the Pennsylvania State Sabbath School Association, by A. B. Bunn Van Ormer.

of the pupils questioned. The Bible Schools had been studying the New Testament for some time, and its material, through the operation of the law of recency of mental impression should have been so prominent as to have overpowered weak interests in other material.

What does the study teach? From eight to twelve years of age, sixty-five per cent. of the boys' selections were from Old Testament material. Of the preferences of the girls of the same age, fifty-nine per cent. were from Old Testament material. If one cared to enter into more detail, it would appear that these percentages are really low. In view of the fact of the study's having been made when it was, when New Testament material was recent, we are compelled to believe that there is some significance attaching to the fact of the preponderance of Old Testament material. There might be some reason for it. That reason seems to be found in the "Doctrine of Interest."

This study serves another purpose, and because of this we turn aside for a little while "questionnaire" method. Dr. Schauffler has "cross-questioned" Prof. Dawson's work on "Children's Interest in Bible Material," and as a result of this cross-questioning is constrained to call in question some of Prof. Dawson's inferences. It is easy to see loopholes in the process of the cross-questioning, though at first glance he seems to score against Prof. Dawson. Until more details of the process are furnished us, Dr. Schauffler has done nothing more than to point out a probable source of error. He has not shown that error actually came from that source.

One of the lines along which he seeks to raise suspicions as to the validity of the Dawson results is that of recency of impression. The popularity of John the Evangelist with the Dawson respondents is to be accounted for, Dr. Schauffler says,

"Not because they had *spontaneous* interest in John, but because for six months previously that had been dinned into them

<sup>1&</sup>quot;Pastoral Leadership of Sunday School Forces," page 67 f.

-John, John, John, John; and when you turned the stop-cock out ran John first."

This "dinning in" of John occurred in view of the fact "that for the first six months of that year," (1899, in which the Dawson questionnaire was issued), "we were in the Gospel of John." Does John thus keep himself in the foreground of his narrative?

If this reasoning holds good—if recency of impression and frequency of repetition ("dinning") alone determine the things to be retained and recalled, then the results of our study should have made the material of the New Testament predominate. For this is the material the children had been having. But the material that predominated was not that over which they had just worked.

Here was something more than recency, more potent than recency. What was it, if not a matter of spontaneous interest?

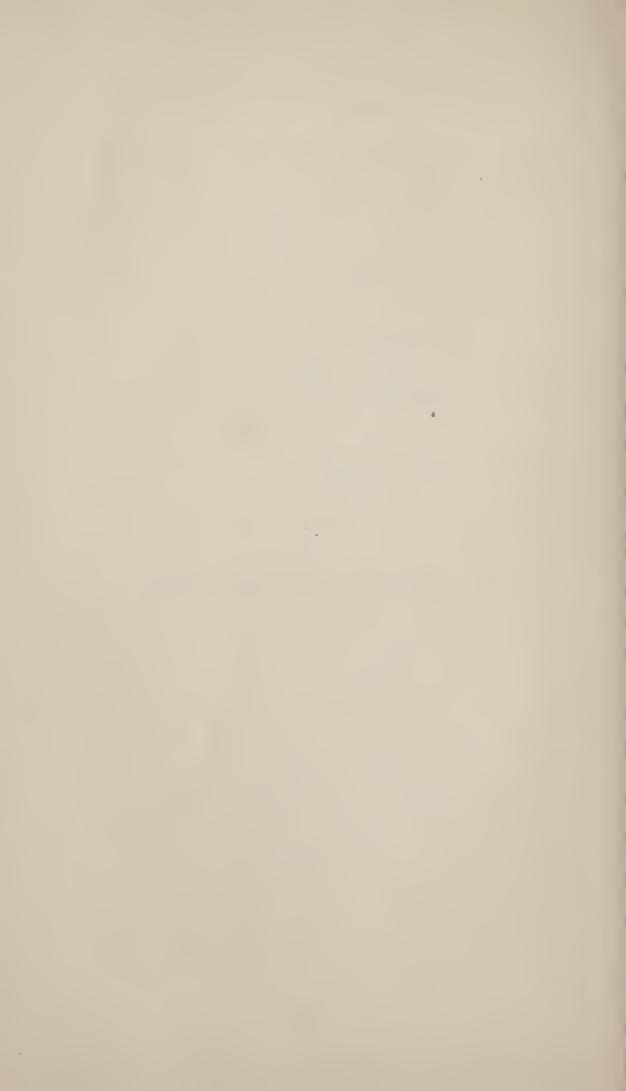
And, if the questionnaire is not limited to the fields of recency and repetition, it is then to us a legitimate instrument of investigation.

This same study of the crucifixion lesson sheds some light where Prof. Dawson's study does not. His study begins with children eight years of age. The one under discussion begins with children of four years. Fifty-three (53) per cent. of the preference of the boys from four to eight years, and fifty-nine (59) per cent. of the girls of the same age were for Old Testament material. This, too, under the handicap of the recent teaching of New Testament material.

It does seem that Old Testament material should predominate in the teaching of children under twelve years of age. And yet one should be reasonably positive. The two studies referred to are very meager as to the number of pupils they included, the latter being very much more so than the former. But they teach the same lesson in some respects. There is a discrepancy between them as to the interests at eight years of age that urges to a further and more comprehensive investigation of the subject. We are firm in our belief in the desirability of, the necessity for, using interest as a determinator of the curriculum; but there is much more to be done. Who will co-operate?

## Χ.

THE CHILD AND THE STORY.



### THE CHILD AND THE STORY.

THE Bible School, in taking on itself the task of serving as a factor in the moral and religious growth of the child, has given to itself a problem of no little complication. Not the least element of this complication is that of the intangibility of the object sought after, the ease with which real moral or religious growth often eludes the careful scrutiny of those anxiously looking for evidence of it, the fact that growth in this phase of life does not submit to tabulation in terms of percentage, thus making possible a comparison with previously reached attainments. So great is this complication that, because of the limitations under which we work and must continue to work, we shall never be able to remove it entirely and make the work of those interested in morality and religion simple and capable of absolute comprehension.

The fact that the problem is a complicated one is not without its benefits to us in our (165)

effort to be of service to the boys and the girls. It gives us constantly something to strive for, thus saving us from that intellectual death that comes when we feel that we have fully comprehended the whole matter. It inspires us to an effort to move a little nearer to the absolute solution. It encourages us to rely on and make use of such laws as have already yielded themselves to careful study and observation. It warns us against the tendency to emphasize and magnify some one principle or method, to the exclusion of others that may come to us well accredited and having stood the test of careful experiment. It tells us that we may reasonably expect the years to bring us more and more help, and it advises us to welcome any help they may bring.

There is another advantage coming from a recognition of the complicated nature of our problem. Those who reflect on the complication—may their tribe increase—will become more and more willing to possess their souls in patience as they await the fruition of their faithful seed sowing. Alas, the impatience that we often manifest!—an impatience

that bewails the absence of so-called "results," that chastises itself for their absence, as if results were things wholly within our control.

A failure to duly appreciate the complex and difficult nature of the work to be done by us, coupled with insufficient knowledge of the laws of moral and religious growth, has given rise to a demand for immediate results that is not in accord with accepted teachings upon these things. How hard it is to sow the seed, and then, through long months, trust to God, operating through laws of His own ordaining, to give us the fruitage! Have you never been tempted to assist the slowly unfolding leaf of the rubber plant in its effort to mature? A similar impatience characterizes much of our work with children.

This anxiety for results, we feel, has given rise to a custom very much in vogue in our efforts along moral and religious lines—that of moralizing with children as to what the material in hand teaches. It is a practice that is antagonized by the thought of more recent times, and that finds little sanction in the psychology of childhood. It is a practice to which we easily lend ourselves, feeling that by pointing the moral we have the more fully discharged our obligation to the child. Or, it may be a device to which we resort by way of easily satisfying our consciences that we have done our duty.

By way of seeing whether or not this moralizing custom is worthy the prominence often given it, and worthy of our sole reliance in our efforts, let us look at some facts that may throw light on the question.

There is a technical term that is destined to play a larger and larger rôle in the educational world of the century upon which we have entered. To this term, and the thought for which it stands, we turn, asking for its verdict upon the custom of "pointing a moral" as we deal with children.

Suggestion is the term to which we refer. Of the several senses in which this term is used in literature, the one in which it is now technically used can best be approached through hypnotism. The hypnotic subject does as the experimentor indicates he shall do, however absurd or ridiculous the thing indi-

cated may be. He does the thing in a mechanical way, as if he had no part in the action at all, as if he were merely a tool in the hands of the experimentor. And this is just what he is. He is a machine that is operated by the ideas that are given to him. Whatever he is told to do, he does, and yet it is not he but the idea itself that carries out the action. He is powerless to do otherwise than as has been indicated to him. This is hypnotic suggestion. The presence of an idea in the mind is sufficient explanation for the acting out of that idea. The idea acts itself out. This tendency of an idea thus to work itself out into action is called suggestion. But we are concerned with hypnotic suggestion only as it serves to illustrate the thing we have under consideration. Hypnotic suggestion is abnormal. The suggestion about which we are concerned at present is normal. The abnormal helps us to understand the normal, inasmuch as there is a similarity between them, as well as a difference.

Normal suggestion is now a recognized fact. We are all more or less subject to the laws of its operation, unless we are among the class of those who "suffer from continual absence of mind, or those who are hopelessly stupid and lack the power of concentration." Have you never stepped to the rhythm of the street piano? Have you never assumed a more erect posture upon seeing someone whose carriage was more erect than yours? Have you never yawned upon seeing another do the same thing? Have you never seen the contagion of laughter? Have you never known anyone to select an article of clothing upon seeing another person wear such an article? Have you never, in reading a biography, found yourself taking higher views of life, although the biographer made no appeal to you to do so? If you have never known any of these experiences, you may be disposed to quarrel with Prof. James when he speaks

"... of that mental suggestibility which we all, to some degree, possess."

Nor will you be likely to accept the statement of Dr. Sidis:

"Everyone is more or less suggestible." But if these statements should set you to thinking and observing, the facts in the case would soon convince you of the substantial truthfulness of the statements.

If it be granted that adults are subject to the laws of suggestion, operating under conditions entirely normal, what shall we say of the child? Is he more, or less, susceptible, if susceptible at all?

Suggestion very frequently exerts an influence on adults that falls short of leading to an action. This is the case because of the presence in the mind of other and distracting ideas, as well as because of the suggestion's having to encounter the force of long-established habits, which may be too strong for it. We thus have two things that tend to neutralize the suggestion, the presence of ideas other than the one suggested, and the presence of habits. But both of these things are comparatively absent in children. Because of this fact we should expect children to be more susceptible than are adults. This expectation is borne out by a careful study of children. The fact of their suggestibility can be verified in any home, school, or place of play. A very

little verification will lead to an acceptance of the statement of Guyau, who says:

"All children are peculiarly open to suggestion."

Having reached the conclusion that children are susceptible to the influence of suggestion—that an idea in their minds has a strong tendency to work itself out into action,¹ we may indulge in a little more detail, getting a further fact that is important to a decision of the question of the advisability of distinctly setting forth the moral contained in the material we give to the children.

The Abbé de Fenelon, in his "Education of Girls," given to the public in 1687, says:

"I even believe that indirect instructions, which are not so wearisome as lessons and remonstrances, are often all that you need to make use of."

He gives the following illustration of his meaning:

"One person might occasionally ask an-

<sup>1 &</sup>quot;Every idea is a force, and therefore a commencement of an action."—P. L. Thomas, "La Suggestion," etc., page 4.

other in their [the children's] presence, 'Why do you do this?' And the other might reply, 'I do it for such a reason.' For example: 'Why do you confess your fault?' 'Because I would have committed a still greater one in disowning it, like a coward, by a falsehood, and because nothing is nobler than to say frankly, I am wrong.'"

Given an occasion that would justify this conversation—and Fenelon warns us against affectation—and the children within whose hearing it would occur would be more likely, upon an opportunity, other things being equal, to practice the virtue of frank confession than they would be as the result of a direct effort to have them do so.

This thought of the French Abbé is one that is to-day being emphasized and used. It has been found, by experiment, that the force of a suggestion of the kind that now concerns us is greater the more indirect the suggestion. And conversely, the more direct the suggestion is, the less force it will have as a suggestion.

If these facts are accepted, do we have

1 Sidis: "The Psychology of Suggestion."

anything that bears on the effort to point a moral? What conclusion may we draw from them? May we not conclude that it may often be sufficient for us to concern ourselves with the presentation of the truth to the children; and that, when so presented, the truth is potent to change a course of action, or to indicate a course before unthought of, and to impel one along the indicated course?

When we read,

"Suggestion as a method of control is risky in cases where training in judgment and choice is one chief benefit of the act. It is bad for any rational being to be forever hoodwinked into doing this, that and the other thing," 1

we have a qualification, a limitation to the use of suggestion pointed out. But in so far as our concern is with matters of moral and religious nurture, in so far does this stricture upon suggestion not apply. Our concern is not merely that particular acts may be done. We are concerned that they may be done and become habitual in the light of principle.

<sup>1 &</sup>quot;Elements of Psychology."—Thorndike, page 287.

And these principles can often be coupled with the act in which they find expression at the time of, and by means of, the suggestion. Rather than seeking to "hoodwink" into doing "this, that and the other thing," we seek by means of suggestion to indicate the thing that ought to be done and to aid in a decision to do the thing, to set going a factor that shall in part counteract the fact of the existence of a line of least resistance making for the unethical, the unrighteous; we seek to give the good an equal, or a more nearly equal, chance with the bad to find expression in action.

If this "hoodwinking" objection to the use of suggestion is accepted and applied impartially it can be made to tell against the practice of moralizing and against direct injunctions and commands to children, as well as against suggestion. Though the former are not cases of "hoodwinking," they, equally with suggestion, would deprive the child of the "training in judgment and choice."

The psychology of suggestion contains several valuable pedagogical applications that lie outside our present purpose. But in passing

to the application we now want to make, we wish merely to refer to the fact that suggestion warns us against presenting negative material, teaching children what they are not to do. It tells us to use positive material only, until an issue compels a negation.

The writer, some years ago, heard an educational worker at a teachers' institute tell the story of the mother who, on going away from home for awhile, called her children for a few final precautionary prohibitions. Her conference with the children ran as follows:

"Children, you are not to go up-stairs while I am away. But if you do go up-stairs, you are not to go into the back room. But if you do go into the back room, you are not to play with the beans piled there. But if you should play with the beans, do not put any into your noses."

There is no need to finish the narrative for any persons who know child-life. The physician eventually succeeded in preventing the nasal cavities from becoming vegetable gardens.

The story seemed to have been made to order. But it is not at all improbable. The

writer knows of kittens having been put "into the Baltimore heater," and of little pigs having been run through a windmill after thoughtful parents had enjoined upon their children not to do these things. Thus does the law operate, as any fireside will abundantly verify.

Nor is this prohibition upon telling children what they are not to do, this pedagogical injunction against parents and teachers from whose lips "don't" is ever falling, an arbitrary thing, nor yet a hasty inference from the doctrine of suggestion. It will bear the light of antagonism, offering in its own defence the following explanation. The picturable part of the statement is the part that is potent in securing action, as has been explained above. But the picturable part of a prohibition is the positive part. The negative part is not picturable. Because of this, the words call up an action-picture in the mind. When there, it tends to realize itself, even in spite of the prohibition. A child's acting contrary to the prohibition is not a case of willful disobedience, of necessity. The prohibition, through

the potency of its picturable part, sets a child a task difficult of accomplishment—a task no less than that of voluntarily inhibiting the tendency to action that always accompanies the picturable part of a prohibition. The yielding to this tendency on the child's part, his failure to achieve success in inhibiting the tendency, is quite as helpful a way of viewing the "disobedience" as is that of reading his action in the light of moral reprobateness. A positive injunction disobeyed raises an entirely different issue. With the abolition of the "don'ting" attitude and practice will disappear much of the so-called disobedience of childhood.

And now, what of The Child and the Story? For this is our concern. Nothing so meets the psychological demands of suggestion in dealing with the moral and religious training of children as does the story. The story has its place in education from several points of view, but no point of view pleads more strongly for the use of the story than does the one under consideration. Could we learn the art of substituting the indirect for

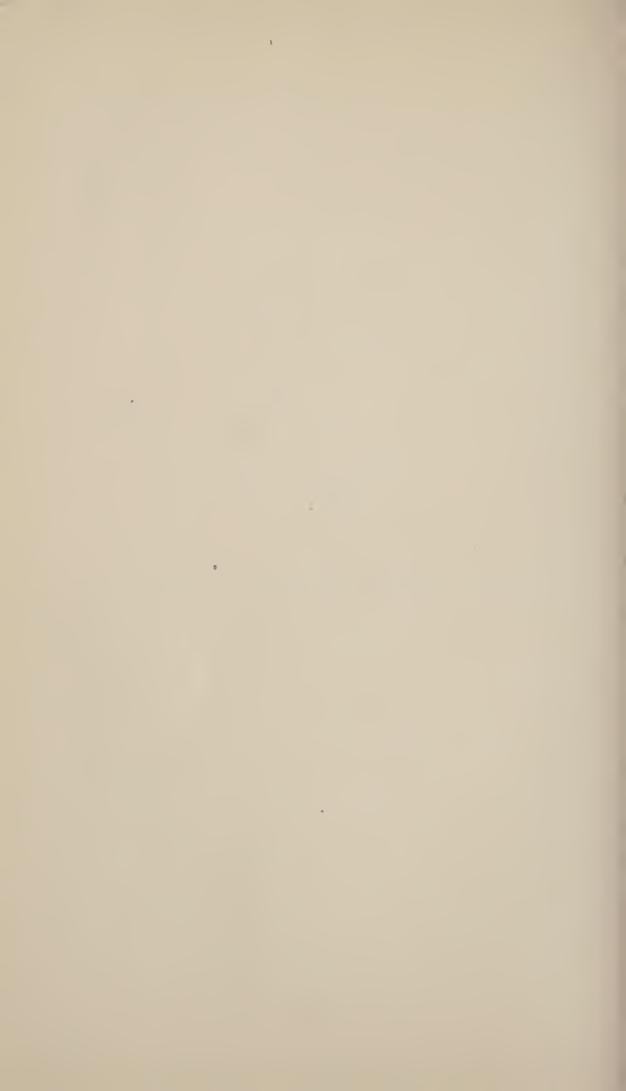
the direct, the story for the moralizing and the exhortation, to say nothing of the nagging and the "don'ting" of so many homes and schools and Bible Schools, the task of helping children to maturity would be less troublesome. By means of the story a child can be led into new and clearer views of the truth that pertains to the life that he may reasonably be expected to live at his age and stage of development. The story can be used to lead a child to see himself in the light of the experience of the race, as well as in the light of the revealed will of God. The story is the great means whereby a child can be led to sit in judgment on his own action and life, as David was led to do by the prophet's story. Nothing can so mirror the child to himself as can the story. No moralizing can so effectually give an ideal to the child as can the story. And with it all goes the impulse to realize the thing thus indirectly presented. The story not only brings into view the thing to be done; it furnishes, also, an impetus to the doing of the thing.

The story is a great dynamic factor in moral and religious nurture.



## XI.

THE BIBLE AND THE CHILD.



#### THE BIBLE AND THE CHILD.

FROM the vocabulary of our everyday life, no two terms could have been chosen that would lay a stronger claim to our interest or that would have a greater wealth of significance to humanity than these two that are brought into relation by our caption.

The Bible! The Book—pre-eminently so! Teaching the way of life and warning against the way of death; conveying strength, guidance, consolation, peace, when the soul's needs cry out for them; pointing the way through the valley of the shadow, and illumining the hills of the farther side with the sunlight of immortality—

"the volume that displays
The mystery, the life which cannot die."

It is a volume that is well worthy of the large share of the world's thought that has been given it in the past, that is to be given it in the future.

The child! Who does not feel like applying to the child-mind, and in an "all the more so" manner, these lines of Wordsworth on contemplating the adult mind?—

"Not chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
By help of dreams—can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often when we look
Into our minds—into the mind of man."

Who does not agree with Dr. Hall, who has done so much for the child, inspiring men and women in secular and in religious education to put the child in their midst, and to do this in an intelligent and a real way? Who does not agree with him when he says:

"There is one thing in nature, and one alone, fit to inspire all true men and women with more awe and reverence than Kant's starry heavens—the soul and body of the child"?

To be unable to sympathize with these sentiments is to confess that the possibilities of the child and our responsibilities because of them have not been duly reflected upon.

The child summates, if he does not recapitulate, the race's past conditions, the race's development to higher planes. He conditions this development by means of the laws divinely written in his nature and awaiting the work of the patient, prayerful, conscientious decipherer.

Oh, child! product of the past and prophecy of the future, organizer of society and bringer of unselfishness into many hearts that otherwise would never have thrilled with this Christlike emotion, reveal to us the laws of thy nature, that we may know how to treat thee the better!

Though not forgetful of Mr. Fernald's stricture on the use of the term "the child," we continue to use the term, believing that there is no need of special coaching on the use of a general term.

What, in our study of the problem of the Bible and the child, is the relative importance of these two terms of surpassing interest? On our determination of this element the solution of the problem largely turns. Our course of procedure is, consciously or unconsciously,

conditioned by our answer to this question of the relative importance of the two terms and the realities for which they stand. The answer to this question has, in a large measure, given us present and past Bible systems; and into the arrangement of future courses must the answer to this question go as one of the elements, if not the element, of primal importance.

Is the Bible an end in itself, given without regard for the child, for humanity and its needs? Is it a book that is to be studied and committed, for the studying and committing of which special blessings are received as a "reward of merit"—or this failing, a red or a blue ticket is given? Is it a book whose contents children must learn "by heart," simply because it is the Bible they are memorizing? So highly do some esteem this precious book that they fall into a crude idolatry—an idolatry that may be, that is, fraught with dire consequences. Dangerous, indeed, is this Bibliolatry, if it leads to a wrong treatment of the child.

There are others who, though they rever-

ence the Bible and yield obedience to its precepts, follow its directings and draw from its never-failing sources help for their daily experiences, nevertheless view the Bible as a means to the accomplishing of a supreme end, that of the moral and religious development of God's children. When these read:

"Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee."

"The law was a schoolmaster to lead us unto Christ."

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word,"

they see in the Word evidence of the fact that the Bible is a book to be used by man, for man's good, help, direction, correction, instruction. They say that, if it is thus to be used as there is need for it in adult life, the same principle can be employed with reference to child-life. Inasmuch as man's need, conscious and self-seen, determines the use he makes of the Bible, these say, they see no reason why the child's needs, carefully studied, should not determine the employment of the Bible in his religious training.

This is equivalent to saying that the child is the more fundamental of the two terms employed in our caption. The laws of his being, if such exist, should be regarded in teaching him, in our solution of the problem of the Bible and the child.

If such laws exist, did we say? This is conceded now.

"I am firmly convinced," writes Froebel in his letters, "that all the phenomena of the child-world, those that delight us, as well as those that grieve, depend upon fixed laws, as definite as those of the cosmos, the planetary system, and the operations of nature. And it is possible, therefore, to discover them and examine them."

Dr. Oppenheim says of the laws of the child's development:

"... they act just as steadily and ruthlessly as the laws of gravitation, of the conservation of energy."

Such laws of child-nature are now thought to exist. If they exist, they are laws of God's

ordaining, and as such they have a right to be considered, as much so as has the Bible, a written revelation of God to men.

The child may therefore be said to be fundamental in the problem that is before us; and the Bible, to be a means to be used in our efforts to secure the moral and religious development of the child. Its material is to be used as the needs of the child may demand, and not as an unintelligent regard for the Bible's sacredness, together with a failure to comprehend child-nature and its needs, may dictate.

Granting, then, that the Bible is to be the means employed in an effort to secure the growth of the child's moral and religious nature, and that the more fundamental factor is the child, the laws of whose development are to direct us in our effort to solve the problem of the Bible and the child, how shall we know these laws of growth?

Shall we do, as has been done so exclusively in the past, and as is done so largely by many in the present—study the stream of adult consciousness, fringed by memories of childhood days, and, resting on the wholly gratuitous

assumption that the stream of child-consciousness flows in a similar way and is fed by the same tributaries, conclude that the child is to be treated as an adult of limited "strength, knowledge, and experience"? Is the difference thus one of degree, merely, and not one of kind?

If we so do, the question of the Bible and the child is merely a matter of toning down any part of the Bible so as to bring it within the realm of the child's limitations of "strength, knowledge, and experience." We are familiar with the results of this toning down process, leading, as it does, to strained and forced presentations of portions of the Word.

We are too apt to treat the child as if he were really, veritably, a "little man," or if we do not regard him as having attained this manly height, we so treat him as to "make a man of him, Mr. Dombey." We do this, as if long years ago Dickens had not struck this idea a stinging, stunning blow, hard enough to have killed an ordinary fallacy, when he made Paul Dombey look up into the face of

the learned (sic) head-master and say, "Please, sir, I'd rather be a child." The English language could contain no stronger plea than this against this "little-man," or "make-aman-of-him" theory.

Or shall we ignore this deductive process, whose basis is adult life and activity and needs, and resort to a direct study of the child himself, hoping thus to have unveiled to us the laws for which we are searching, and from which, when found, we hope for guidance and direction?

This effort characterizes the thought of the educational world to-day. This study of the child, at times largely intuitive and hastily made, has conditioned nearly every advance step made in the evolution of educational ideas and ideals. Why, then, may we not venture to purposely and consciously employ the same principle in our effort to reach higher planes of procedure as teachers interested in the culture of the moral and religious side of child-life?

Fortunately for such teachers as are concerned in this problem of the correlation of the Bible and the child, or in the problem of a proper Bible course for children, the child has been studied from many and varying points of view. Many of these studies can legitimately be made to contribute to this problem, and to others as well, with which the Bible School has to deal.

As a result of these studies certain things have been made sufficiently probable to be relied upon in arranging a child's curriculum. And, inasmuch as an attempt to apply these principles cannot easily result in anything worse than that which is at present offered the children of the Bible School, there is no danger connected with an experiment in the application of these principles.

One of the things that have been made highly probable is the statement that children are not little men and women. They are children, and to be treated wisely they are to be treated in the light of their own natures rather than in the light of adult natures. This fact—for such we believe it to be—is at once available, and leads us to suspect the wisdom of offering to children the same Bible

material as is given to adults. This fact makes us ready to accept the statement that

"lessons favorable to the adult student are not necessarily useful for the child. There is no known law of education by which a series of lessons can be selected from the Book of Psalms, or the prophecies of Isaiah or Jeremiah, which can be equally useful in all grades of a Church School."

Closely connected with this fact of a child's differing from the adult, growing out of and complementing it, is the fact that there are in the life of the child stages of growth, physical, intellectual, and moral and religious, that are, to a greater or less degree, distinct from one another, and of which each is distinct from the adult stage. Each of these stages has its predominating characteristics, its own needs, and is entitled to special consideration at the hands of those who try to help the child realize his highest possible self.

Secular educational efforts that are worthy of consideration recognize this second fact and are attempting to apply it in the actual work of the schools.

This principle as applied in secular education leads to an attempted adaptation of different material to these several stages of the child's development rather than to an attempted adaptation of the same material to all stages. Why should not the same principle lead to a similar tentative effort on the part of those concerned in the problem of the Bible and the child? To say why it should not is more difficult, if at all possible, than it is to say why it does not lead to such an adaptation.

This supposedly new idea encounters at once the inertia of humanity, manifested in the belief that for the purpose of supplying the needs of children any part of the Bible is as good as any other part. It is reasoned that "all Scripture is profitable . . . for instruction in righteousness," and that because this is true every part of Scripture is just as profitable at any stage of life as is any other part, though it is added:

"Any Bible teacher worthy of the name can, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, adapt these lessons to the NEEDS OF THE CLASS."

And in the very argument we have granted to us the validity of the principle opposed.

This principle of adaptation of material, of material that is already adapted to the needs of the several ages, is, like many other "new ideas," not entirely new. The Hebrews did not allow the reading of the Book of Ezekiel by any person under thirty years of age. And what is the meaning of the following?

"As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."—I Peter ii. 2.

"I have fed you with milk and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it."—I Cor. iii. 2.

"... and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat..."

"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."—Heb. v., part of 12, and 14 entire.

What have we here if there is not a recognition of the fact that some parts of the Word

are more suitable than others for certain stages in life?

And the principle has also found exponents in the early age of the Church. Gregory of Nazianzen argued for a selection of material suitable for different ages of children.

A third principle is one that, though strongly probable, some may not care to accept. It is that, in the choice of material suited to these several stages, we are safe if we follow the lead of the children's interests. Some are afraid of this principle. But when one or two limitations are made to it, it seems to be eminently safe. It is generally recognized by secular workers that it is the part of wisdom to employ, or to appeal to, these interests in dealing with the child.

"The day schools have long since found out that the success of their instruction depends in large measure upon the selection of the subject-matter and the methods of its presentation in accordance with the psychological laws of the children's interest and growth,"

says Dr. DeGarmo, with nothing to show us

that he uses "interest" in the technical sense of a Herbartian; for his use of the plural, "interests," just a little farther on, leads us to believe that he here has in mind something different from the generated or induced interest so much written about by his school of educational thought.

"It is evident," says Mr. Dawson, in his article on Children's Interests in the Bible, "that the principle of interest has the sanction of scientific research and that it is rapidly becoming a standard for estimating the material of instruction." He says this after referring to seventeen distinct recent studies of children's interests, the studies having appeared in eleven of the leading educational magazines. He continues:

"I see no reason why the same principle should not be recognized in shaping the curriculum of religious education."

Mr. Dawson's study shows that children are more interested in certain Bible material at one age than at another, and that each age has its decided preference. A study has been made by the Child Study Department of the

Primary and Junior Council of the Pennsylvania State Sabbath School Association that in a manner corroborates Mr. Dawson's results. What shall we do with the facts?

The law of suggestibility on the part of children serves as an additional helper in the choice of material. The fact that so many children yield to a negative suggestion, as well as the fact that all young children are susceptible to the influence of suggestion as it lurks in a story, in an example lived before the child, must be held in mind alike when selecting the material for and when teaching it to children.

There are some additional facts that in a more extended discussion would call for consideration. The vagueness of children's ideas, together with the desire to hear a story again, or one similar to it (?); their preference for the concrete, the tangible, and their lack of interest in that which is otherwise; the expressive phase of child-nature demanding to a large degree such material as can be applied by children in their daily life, or such

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See Study on Children's Interests in the Bible, page 151.

as will be recalled to their minds by their contact with their natural or social environment; the fundamental principle of acquisition, that of apperception, is to be recognized, but not pushed to an absurdity, as is often done with many good educational principles—all these can be made to contribute to the desired solution of the problem of the Bible and the child. And it is in the light of these principles that, it seems reasonable to say, the correlation of the Bible and the child must be worked out.

Could we be given a system of lessons so presenting the material as to do violence to none of these principles, that system of lessons would be worthy of our confidence and would merit at our hands a careful test in our actual class-room work. Such a system would, it seems, be very much superior to a system that does not make the child and the laws of his development the fundamental and vitalizing principle of its arrangement.



### XII.

AN INTERROGATION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.



# AN INTERROGATION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

#### THE INTERROGATION.

WE wish to ask of Christian Education, as it is organized and operative in practice, if it has so examined its organization and its methods of procedure as to have fully satisfied itself that it is not self-antagonistic; that it is not contributing to a growth of certain character traits which Christian Education in later life must antagonize, must try to neutralize—character traits whose presence in the individual or in society effectually blocks the fuller coming of the kingdom, for which the Master taught us to daily pray; for which the world is really, if often unconsciously, yearning.

No fondness for paradox gives form to this interrogation. Its form is necessitated by the conditions that exist.

There is to be seen in the educational world a tendency to magnify things of the letter, things that are external, incidental, that have to do almost exclusively with means and methods. So strong is this tendency that many seem at times to lose sight of the fact that there are things of the spirit—internal, fundamental, which look to the end to be attained—that attach themselves to matters of education. There are educational things of the spirit and there are educational things of the letter. Between them there arise antagonisms, whereby the literal, the "practical" (so-called) often counteracts or makes inoperative the spiritual, the valuable, the eternal.

The species bears the stamp of the genus. The same tendency is seen in matters of Christian education. There is danger of magnifying the importance of organization, of equipment, of curriculum, etc., till the deeper things are overlooked. There is danger of so em-

phasizing the letter as to overlook, or ignore the spirit.

Thus, there have come to be two conceptions of education—two conceptions of religious education: the one being satisfied with the surface, the tangible, the ponderable things; the other, not neglecting but duly subordinating these things, concerns itself with the things that lie below the surface, that are intangible, imponderable, the things most worth while.

Christian Education of the latter kind looks beyond, back of, over the external marks of Christian Education of the former kind, until it finds the heart-motive. To this it presents its appeal, not so much—and not at all exclusively—by means of direct appeal, exhortation, and preaching (save in the church phase of Christian Education). It rather so safeguards and subordinates its organization and all its methods of procedure as to afford occasion thereby for the development of such motives as are consistent with, the product and the sure marks of, love for Jesus Christ—a love that shall manifest itself in obedience to the

two tables of the second commandment: "Love thyself; thy neighbor as thyself." Whatever else may be done or attempted in the name of Christian Education, an effort to develop altruism as the dominant life-motive must not be neglected. Though everything else be done, failure here marks the failure of education that claims to be distinctively Christian. But to fail to develop altruism is to develop egoism, against which the Church of Christ is commissioned to wage a warfare of annihilation.

The interrogation asks if Christian Education may not at times be self-antagonistic.

The pertinence of this interrogation appears, in part, when we reflect upon the comparative absence of altruism from the motives that predominate in society. We see it in the commercial and industrial world. The rights of millions are trampled upon, while egoism battles with egoism, both combatants alike indifferent to the absolute needs of the millions; recent publications make plain the processes whereby many of the vast accumulations of wealth have been made—processes that have back of them a disregard for the

rights of man, the laws of man, and the laws of God; processes which have entailed suffering, hardship, and wreckage, financial, moral, spiritual, for many. We see it in the political world, where the idea of a call to public, service has been prostituted, and we have instead a seeking for office by methods that undermine both public and private morality, and that deprive us of representation, save in its semblance. Egoism in politics is rapidly making a farce of our boasted-but we fear too little valued-republico-democratic principle of self-government in the interests of the common weal. Colonel Parker, the lamented educational leader, in vigorous but fully justified rhetorical interrogation, asks,

"Is it not true that if we as citizens could go to the polls and vote for public servants with a complete or reasonable conviction that our candidates love their country more than they love themselves, we should be profoundly happy?"

In connection with this lamentable absence of altruism, the pertinence of our interrogation still further appears in the fact that, for a long period of years, Christian Education, as found in home and school and church and in Christian lives, with their potency, has been operative, privileged the while to counteract all this; even commissioned to do so. Men who are captains of sociologically iniquitous industries, men who are serving self and not the common good, who are debauching manhood, and who know no moral restrictions to the reaching of their ambitions, these men, many if not all of them, have at some time been in touch with Christian Education, and have come away with egoism abnormally developed. Many of them are professing Christians.

Has Christian Education ever been so organized as to have contributed to this result? Is it in any respect and at any place so organized as to be a probable contributor to this result to-day? Must not the answer be an affirmative one? If so, the pertinency of the interrogation is apparent.

This affirmative answer has reference to Christian Education in its several phases, as it is found in some homes, in some schools, in

some Bible Schools. In some schools we find prizes, honors, class standings, commencement distinctions, etc., extensively employed as incentives to effort or to good behavior. Catalogues announce them, teachers refer to them, pupils talk of them, wish for them, and some work for them-honestly or otherwise (often otherwise). In the homes we hear these things spoken of, comparisons of children made, winners lauded—an atmosphere, in fact, that leaves no room to doubt the things expected of the children by the homes. Nor is the Bible School willing to be outdone. With its rewards and prizes and tickets, with its class rivalries for attendance or contribution banners, with its devices whereby the child may be induced to part with his money, and thus swell the school or church board treasury, the Bible School is a close second, if not the victor in the mad race away from the real and vital interests of the child.

The system of extraneous rewards and inducements in educational work is of English university origin, and did not originate with the Bible School, as has been claimed by some. From the same source, comes the most famous argument in the system's favor. An outline of this argument is presented as the basis of an examination of the system's reason for being:

Proposition 1. Intellectual improvement depends on what one does for himself.

Proposition 2. This doing for one's self is for a long time painful. The great problem of education is to *induce* a pupil to endure this pain until he reaches a pleasurable stage.

Proposition 3. A stimulus is necessary for a season to counteract the pain of exertion, "to induce the pupil to endure," etc.

Proposition 4. Emulation and love of honor constitute the appropriate stimulus in education.

The first proposition, that intellectual development depends on what one does for himself, asserts an educational commonplace, recognized and used by all skillful teachers.

But this proposition, fundamental to the argument, contains a fallacy that reigns almost supreme in educational circles. The pre-eminence given to the intellect and its develop-

ment has made possible many a practice that otherwise would meet with peremptory challenge, at times on ethical grounds. As if there were no other function of mind, as if society to-day more needs intellectual culture than it needs a development of Christian morality, largely a matter of the heart and will, we have concerned ourselves with intellectual culture to the serious neglect of heart and will, at times to the negative development of these phases of life; for it is possible for "the intellect to grow wise while the heart grows wicked," as Horace Mann contends.

The second proposition, asserting that this self-effort is painful for awhile and then becomes pleasurable is, so far as the painful feature is concerned, an assertion of what has been and of what often is the case, rather than an assertion of what could be and of what should be the case. This proposition as an assertion of what should be the accompaniment of intellectual activity is psychologically antiquated. The later psychology contends that—

"While the love of knowledge takes its

rise in a painful feeling, the sense of ignorance or of perplexity, it is greatly reinforced by the pleasurable feelings which accompany the attainment of knowledge."—Sully.

Intellectual exertion not carried to the point of fatigue is pleasant, if healthful, teaches the same authority. "The fact is," writes Dr. Search, "only our methods of approach are distasteful—truth is always attractive. The rich realm of learning is full of pure delight." 1

Proposition three asserts the need of a stimulus (extraneous is taken for granted) to counteract the pain of exertion. But any little pain, strain, sense of obstacles that might accompany a quest of truth, would be naturally counteracted by the hope of success, by the prevision of the truth as the learner draws consciously nearer and nearer to it, by the emotional concomitant of the intellectual exertion, and by the joy of conquest of truth, not alone at the end of the process, but as each successive partial conquest is achieved. Why, then, an extraneous stimulus?

Proposition four makes of emulation and "Educational Review," Feb., 1896, page 141.

love of honor the appropriate stimulus in education. No one has ever denied to emulation the right to be ranked as a stimulus. It is a potent one. This fact has never been better understood than by the Jesuits, the past masters in the use of the stimulus. Fitting stimulus it is for them, with their principle of ignored instrumentalities, in view of the importance of the end. If our wish is to set a few to intense effort to reach, each before the other, an artificial goal—a goal which, when reached, brings to the successful competitor peculiar temptations of a self-satisfying, self-glorifying kind; a goal which at best proclaims that the winner has but outstripped another, regardless of how it was done, regardless of whether or not he has done his best—if this is our wish, we shall find in emulation the shortest way to the attainment of that wish. Yes, emulation is a stimulus; but it is a stimulus that, in the sense in which it is here employed, has found no sanction in the world's greatest text-book on Education—the Bible.

This argument under consideration contains a fallacy that finds no explicit statement in

connection with the several propositions. If explicitly stated it would read:

"During the painful stages use a powerful stimulus, extraneous, until the pleasurable stages are reached, when the stimulus will no longer be necessary, being replaced by the pleasure incident on the efforts put forth."

The error of dissociating the pleasure and pain in the process of acquiring knowledge we have seen. The two chase each other through the various stages of acquisition. But, for the sake of argument, grant the dissociation contended for by the illustrious author of this defense of the system of extraneous stimulation. The fallacy persists. The stimulus used during the assumed painful stage will not be easily dispossessed. To contend that it will be is to encounter two stubborn facts. The first of these is the law of habituation of motive, asserting that the longer one works under the stimulus of a given motive, the less likely he is to be swayed by any other motive that might try to displace the one to which he has become habituated. The

second fact is that of the refutation of the fallacy by experience with extraneous stimulation. Where has it been found that the stimulus can be removed? It is often applied in the home. Does the secular school remove it, the Bible School, the high school, the college, the university? What a longdrawn-out, painful period must be passed through! How far off the pleasurable stage! The experience of Mr. Lawrence in his Bible School is pertinent. The Robert Raikes diploma, described as "a beautiful lithographed diploma, 14 by 17 inches, designed by the author some twenty years ago," is given for a year of perfect record. For each of six succeeding years a seal is given until the diploma represents seven years of perfect record. And then the thing of present interest. We quote:

"Hundreds of members having earned and received the Robert Raikes diploma, with all its seals, made it necessary to inaugurate something else, lest they lose their interest. We consequently introduced what is known as the Robert Raikes Alumni Diploma. . . . This is much larger and handsomer than

the Robert Raikes diploma, being 19 x 24 inches in size, beautifully lithographed in four colors upon heavy bond paper." 1

Having thus been led through the painful stage of Bible School work, the pupil is ready to go to Bible School for the pleasure there is in it. But no, some pain still lingers. The alumni diploma provides for twelve more annual seals, each required (reasoning from the author's reason for the existence of the alumni diploma), "Lest they lose their interest."

Unconvinced by the argument, unswayed by the name of its distinguished author, we continue to press our interrogation of Christian Education; and in pressing it, we bring against the system of extraneous reward, incentive, stimulus, whether it is employed by church or school or home, taking the form of emulation and of competition as it unavoidably does, the following accusations:

We accuse the system of laying on the majority of those under its sway additional and unnecessary burdens. What of stimu-

<sup>1 &</sup>quot; How to Conduct a Sunday School," pages 163, 164.

lation is to be gotten from the fact that one helps to form the dull background whereby the brightness of the foreground may be made apparent? Stimulus! what a mockery the word to a pupil of ordinary power, of sluggish mental process! The consciousness of one's deficiency is not often classed as an instrument of stimulation.

We accuse the system of contributing, in many instances, to an over-pressure in education that undermines health, and robs society of some of its potentially most useful members. Over-pressure's victims are to be found at all ages of school life. Dr. Talbot, in his work on "Degeneracy," says:

"In children, emotional conditions, school strain, rivalry between classmates, are as liable to produce neurasthenia as are the struggles for existence in later life."

Elsewhere, the same author says:

"It is the spirit of emulation, with its attendant alternation of worry and hope, that causes so many of the acquired nervous disorders of the adult, and which obviously is much more potent with children."

When we recall in this connection Professor Lombroso's contention, that, unlike the lower organisms, the human beings most fit to survive and to bless humanity are the ones that are most likely to be injured, we see that society's loss is much more than a matter of mere numbers. Literature has seen the danger. Dickens, in "Dombey and Son," has given us a classic on over-pressure. And you will easily locate the following paragraph from a lamented author:

"It was a low-roofed room, with a box bed and some pieces of humble furniture, fit only for a laboring man. [We regret the implication of this phrase.] But the choice treasures of Greece and Rome lay on the table, and on the shelf beside the bed college prizes and medals, while everywhere were the roses he loved. His peasant mother stood beside the body of her scholar son."

It is between the lines we read the accusation against educational over-pressure operating through emulation. One such life of promise as was that of "Geordie Hoo" is too much of a social loss. In 1899, at the midsummer distribution of prizes by the University of London, Dr. Alexander Hill was the speaker. He took as his text, the system of offering rewards for scholarship, and severely arraigned it. The first contention in his arraignment was that the system "increases temptation to over-work." His audience thought him facetious, and laughed, at first, at his contention. They ended by cheering his utterances.

We accuse the system of making the intellectual the supreme thing in life, and of developing it, at times, at the expense of the emotional and volitional functions of life. This accusation cannot be substantiated so far as the theory of education goes. We point to the actual practices for substantiation of it.

We accuse the system of displacing a natural incentive to effort by an artificial one, thus deadening real interest in the subject for its own sake, for the sake of its lifeserviceability. There is a danger that the one thus stimulated artificially may not have a real and sincere interest in life, that his concern may be with life's superficial things, because of which he shall miss the true meaning and the true joy of life.

We accuse the system of placing before students a temptation to resort to unfair means, and we aver from observation and from hearsay, what few, if any, educational workers do not know to be a fact, that many students yield to the temptation and resort to unfair means, impelled thereto by the hope of surpassing others, or of making a more creditable personal showing. Are these facts things to which we dare be indifferent? Shall we set up a special standard of educational ethics by which indulgences are granted for all sorts of wrong whilst one is in school or college? What shall we say of the synodically-aided student for the ministry, who with dark lantern and a tried companion, seeks (and finds and uses) the matter for the Greek examination of the following morning? What shall we say of the ingenuity of deception, of acted falsehood, by which coveted standing and rank and distinction are sought for, and often obtained, without the instalment

payments of honest efforts through the term? Can it be that the system is all right and the students all wrong? Does the blame rest properly and solely upon the students in their total depravity? Or shall we enlarge our conception of depravity so as to include in it the system that tempts, as well as the students who yield to the temptation? Homes often help along the evil we are deploring. Many a child carries to school work his parents have done, and for which he is credited. With such credits he wins place and class and school distinction. We have heard of a literary parent, a clergyman, who corrected his son's essays before the essays were presented for the criticisms and the credits of the Professor of English. What shall we say of a system that thus tempts young people and parents to close their eyes to delicate ethical distinctions? How shamefully unequal the competition between the child who has no one at home able to do his work for him, and the cultured parent of blunted ethical sense, who enters the competition by means of a child used as a proxy!

We accuse the system of cultivating egoism and ant-altruism, the motives with which Christian education must contend so vigorously and with so little progress toward final conquest; the motives which grievously afflict society and rob the individual of the joy that comes from the indwelling of altruism, of the Christ motive. If the system's appeals are at all responded to, the responses, one by one, contribute to the growth of the anti-social motives, each response leaving the student more selfcentered than he was before responding. What might be could we rid ourselves of the system so almost universally in vogue is a matter of inference. Yet to those who believe in altruism as the supreme motive of life, as the crux of the Master's social teachings, how thrilling the prospect of an absence of this system! There seems to be a time when the adolescent is peculiarly open to the cultivation of altruism, when he thrills with interest in others and when the motive might be fixed for life. at this time he is subjected to the artificial system and is made to be self-considering. By the laws of imitation, of suggestion, of the social atmosphere, of the sanction of those looked up to as guides and leaders and friends, he is led, beguiled, driven into self-considering channels, which flow not through fields of altruism.

We accuse the system of presenting to the young and immature false ideals of life, giving them distorted and grotesque notions of success, a false perspective of life's opportunities and duties. The law of the potency of ideals holds as well for false and negative ideals as for true and positive ones, with this difference —the negative ones actualize themselves in conjunction with the moral gravitation of the race, and therefore along the lines of least resistance and easily; the positive ones must counteract this downward gravity-pull, and therefore actualize themselves with difficulty. If we give erroneous ideals we must expect them to bring forth their corresponding life activities and to persist with a baffling obstinacy even when one is awakened to their negative character. Nor is this all. These errors of life attitude, of ideal, of dominant motive, are strangely self-perpetuative. They

go out into homes and schools and church, there to multiply their kind.

We accuse the system of making necessary many a life-long battle with the lower in one's self after the vision of the higher has been given to him, and of making more difficult the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification in a life that has in earlier years been habituated to the system's motive.

If one holds the biologic conception of mental development and believes with Lowell that—

"From the lower to the higher next,"
Not to the highest is nature's text,"

if one believes with him in the analogy of the tadpole's tail, to such we accuse the system, contending that it interferes with this very process. The interference is seen, not as is so often the case, in the cutting off of the tail in a vain effort to hurry the development of the legs. It reverses the order, preventing the development of the legs by making the tail a permanent feature. The period of selfishness, out of which and by means of which, on this theory, there should be a growth into the

weaker altruism and then into the higher and higher stages of it, is so prolonged and the development of selfishness is so abnormal, that no energy is left for altruism; it remains but rudimentary, to tell of what should have been.

There are in recent educational literature two apparent defenses of the system under consideration; one by Dr. Gordy, in his "Briefer Elementary Education," the other by Prof. Griggs, in his "Moral Education." If these could be shown to be sane defenses of the system in the intense form in which it is employed, they could be replied to by the fact that neither author is interested, professedly, in education that is marked off as distinctively Christian.

But these are not defenses of the system arraigned.

Dr. Gordy's defense of emulation is a defense of emulation of so mild a kind that it differs by but very little from imitation. He gives to emulation as an emotional coloring the feeling of stress because of inferiority. He grants that this dislike of inferiority may easily develop into a desire for superiority, and

that the self-regarding character of emulation very clearly allies it with the combative, aggressive tendency of a child. He sees the dangers. When we read—

"Deal with the child in such a way that he will wish not to emulate unworthy examples,"

we cannot by predetermined effort find even between the lines a defense of the system as it is operative in many places under the sanction of Christian Education.

But when Prof. Griggs says "even prizes may have a place," and refers to "the modern reaction against their use," the advocate of the system may feel that he has found a standing place. He is doomed to disappointment. The context adds:

"... their occasional therapeutic value. To have this value they must be given as rarely and as carefully as a physician gives a physical stimulant, and we must never let them be substituted for the real nourishment of the moral life. Moreover, their use is helpful, not when given for superior natural endowments, but when they are

used to stimulate sincere effort. With these restrictions, it is possible to make them a temporarily helpful if an altogether subordinate element in furthering moral growth.'

The validity of the analogy between the physician and the one entrusted with the moral culture of a child may be open to objections. But granting the significance attached to it by Prof. Griggs, the system is condemned. The restrictions demanded do not exist in practice, would take from the system all that now characterizes it, and would require a much higher degree of professional efficiency than is required in the employment of the existent system.

As if by way of salving a hurt conscience, Christian Education at times bewails the condition of things as they are in society to-day and interests itself in a remedy. This interest not infrequently runs in the channel of criticism of the public school and exhausts itself in an effort to have the Bible read and prayer offered in the school.

This procedure is too fallacious to be an answer to the interrogation we are making.

It is fallacious in that it throws the burden on the public school, where in justice it should rest most lightly. The public school is but one of several factors operating to bring about social conditions. It is just as illogical for the other factors to accuse the public school of failure and of recreancy to high duty and privilege as it would be for the public school to so accuse the other factors; even more so. For the public school is, in large measure, a product of the other factors. For home and church to accuse the public school is for them. to accuse themselves. Some of the most baneful features of the public school to-day exist because of the attitude of the community, of the demands made by the homes. The public school to-day sees visions whose materialization will be long deferred because of the community life, of business standards, of political ideals and practices—yes, and because of a heritage of ideals and of traditions passed down to it by institutions existing as exponents of Christian Education.

There is danger of being satisfied with the formal. The reading of the Bible in the

schools may or may not be the blessing we wish. Certain it is that it is possible by example to give the lie to precept, by personality to beget contempt for precept. There is something better than the legal, compulsory use of the Bible, so apt to be perfunctory. This better thing is the legal privilege to use the Bible, and the selection of such teachers as will, out of their love for the Bible, their appreciation of its value, choose to use it. More than the Bible in the schools is there need of the embodiment of its teachings in the lives of those in charge of education. Let us not deceive ourselves with externals, with the letter. One can conceive of schools exerting a positive moral and religious influence though denied the privilege of using the Bible. Likewise is it possible to conceive of schools using the Bible and yet exerting an influence that makes not for righteousness.

Are we disposed to ask why this system, existing by the sanction of Christian Education, has been allowed to exist, and does now exist? We shall find the answer in large part in the assertion that the system

has so securely intrenched itself because it moves along the line of least resistance, fixing its attention on things more easily attainable, and choosing the easiest way possible of attaining unto them; more or less disregarding all other considerations.

It is much easier for a mother wishing to have a child take disagreeable medicine, to achieve the result by saying, "If you do not take it I will give it to your brother John," than to have previously developed the habit of doing things that ought to be done. It is a much easier thing to pay pupils for effort, for behavior of a proper kind, than it is to secure effort and behavior through previous development. It may be the easiest way of having Bible verses stored in the minds of children to resort to a commercial transaction in cardboard, red, yellow, and blue, redeemable later on. But Mr. Riley's lines,—

"E'en these tickets, blue and red,
For the Bible verses said—
Such as these His memory kept,—
Jesus wept."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Horace Mann gives the instance.

show that the motive may be sordid, and the end "the tickets blue and red." Mr. Clemens, in "Tom Sawyer," points out another possibility of the Bible School ticket, that of speculation. A picture of a denominational "patron saint," given for a stipulated contribution, may increase the amount of money a missionary board will receive, but we question whether such methods will at all contribute to the development of the benevolent spirit in the next generation of church members. (A spirit from an over-development of which the Church does not suffer at the present time.)

There can be no question of the simplification of class-room processes where the system of extraneous stimulus, in some one or more of its various forms, prevails. But there are some other things that exist along with this simplification that raise a serious question as to its desirability, so far as the pupils' good is concerned.

The system exists largely by virtue of its non-resistance, as well as by the sanction that it has from hoary traditions.

And yet, although the system has the sanc-

tion of hoary and almost universal tradition, that sanction is not universal. In all ages protest has been made against the system.

William Cowper, in his "Review of Schools," arraigned the system in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Setting forth the defects of the system, he wrote:

"But judge where so much evil intervenes,
The end, though plausible, not worth the means,
Weigh for a moment classical desert
Against a heart depraved and temper hurt;
Hurt, too, perhaps for life; for early wrong
Done to the nobler part affects it long;
And you are staunch, indeed, in learning's cause
If you can crown a discipline, that draws
Such mischief after it, with much applause."

Byron, too, in his "Thoughts on a College Examination," sees defects in the system, and concludes the poem thus:

"This much at least I may presume to say,
The premium can't exceed the price they pay."

Maria Edgeworth had written:

"Superior knowledge is dearly acquired at the price of a malevolent disposition." Young, in earlier times, and Ruskin, in more recent, have made statements that were a criticism of the English system.

Bacon has seen the danger of this system, and has added the weight of his name to an antagonism of it. He says:

"Men have a foolish manner (both parents and schoolmasters and servants) in creating and breeding an emulation between brothers during childhood, which many times sorteth to discord when they are men, and disturbeth families."

The attack here is along the line of the practical only. But it merits a place for Bacon among those of the past who have seen clearly upon this vital matter.

Among the many things for which Horace Mann, the apostle of the American public school system, stood, was that of antagonism to the system under consideration. In a lecture given in the first year of his secretary-ship of the Massachusetts Board of Education, he says, speaking of emulation:

"I entreat all intelligent men to give to this subject a most careful consideration.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Essay on "Parents and Children."

And let those who use it as a quickener of the intellect beware lest it prove a deprayer of the social affections. . . . No cruelty to a child can be so great as that which barters morals for attainments." . . "Will there ever be any less of this deadly strife for the ostensible signs of precedence, in the social and political arena, while the germs of emulation are so assiduously cultivated in the schoolroom, the academy, and the college? The pale ambition of men ready to sacrifice country and kind for self, is only the fire of youthful emulation heated to a white heat."

We do not wonder that this ardent lover of young people, when he took charge of Antioch College, forbade the presence of the system in connection with the institution, an institution which, under Mann's presidency, became the pioneer of six or seven advance educational movements.

Through her journal, we are able to see how another American educator of international repute looked upon the system. Maria Mitchell, Vassar's brilliant astronomer, wrote:

"I start for faculty, and we probably shall elect what are called 'honor girls.' I dread the struggle that is pretty certain to come. The whole system is demoralizing and foolish. Girls study for prizes and not for learning, when 'honors' are at the end. The unscholarly motive is wearing. If they studied for sound learning, the cheer which would come with every day's gain would be health preserving."

A present Vassar professor, Lucy M. Salmon, contends for the same principle, asserting:

"The practice of giving honors is demoralizing, and if it could be eradicated from the educational system a long step in advance would be taken."

In one of the universities of the West, that of Indiana, the system is under the ban. We quote from the then Vice-President of this university:

"I rather incline to believe with those who think that everything in the school which excites emulation, everything in the way of prizes and honors, all that sort of thing, from the bottom to the top, does more harm than good. Of course, if Colonel Parker were here he would say the same thing in his great, emphatic way. I am not sure of it, but it is true as far as my experience goes. In our university, for instance, we give no honors, we give no grades, we give nothing at all but 'pass' and 'not pass.' That does not result in the hundreds of students who are there doing just enough to pass. They did not come there for that. Their attention is turned away from the artificial effort for marks, to the work they are there to do." 1 2

Let us hear how Colonel Parker says the same thing "in his emphatic way":

"Bad as corporal punishment has been and is, the substitution of a system of rewards is infinitely worse. Fear of punishment is bad enough, but the systematic development of selfishness is damnable!"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> W. L. Bryan, in Chautauqua Assembly Herald, for 1896.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> An examination of the present catalog of the university shows that some prizes are now given.

Again, he asserts:

"No prayer-meeting, no religion on earth can eradicate this monstrous tendency of selfishness which parents and teachers are ignorantly and prayerfully fostering."

Dr. Search, in his article on the "Ethics of the Public School," writes thus:

"I have been thirty-five years in the schoolroom as teacher and pupil; have lived a good part of that time (with regret be it said) in the atmosphere of prizes and percents; have watched their false spur and unnatural coloring of character; have looked upon noble ambition perverted to things abnormal; have seen the physical, intellectual, and moral wreckage that ensued; and, as a result of personal observation and personal experience, I do not hesitate to pronounce the whole system of incentives to which reference has been made, as abnormal, unprofitable, false, and immoral. Their entire tendency is to temporary result, to stifled interest, to the recognition of an unnatural means as an end, to the development of a selfish spirit and to dishonest practice, as well as to over-pressure and over-nervous and physical strain."

How long must this system be endured? Is there a possibility of relief from it and its effects? There is, we believe; for we believe there is that in human nature that will in the end lead to a response to an appeal to the higher nature, if at the proper time such appeal be made. Such responses have been made. Very refreshing, indeed, is the dedicatory sentence of the book, "A Study of the Sky," by Dr. Herbert A. Howe, of the University of Denver:

TO HUNDREDS OF MY STUDENTS,
WHOSE STEADFAST DEVOTION
TO THEIR DAILY TASKS
IS A DELIGHTFUL MEMORY,
THIS BOOK IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

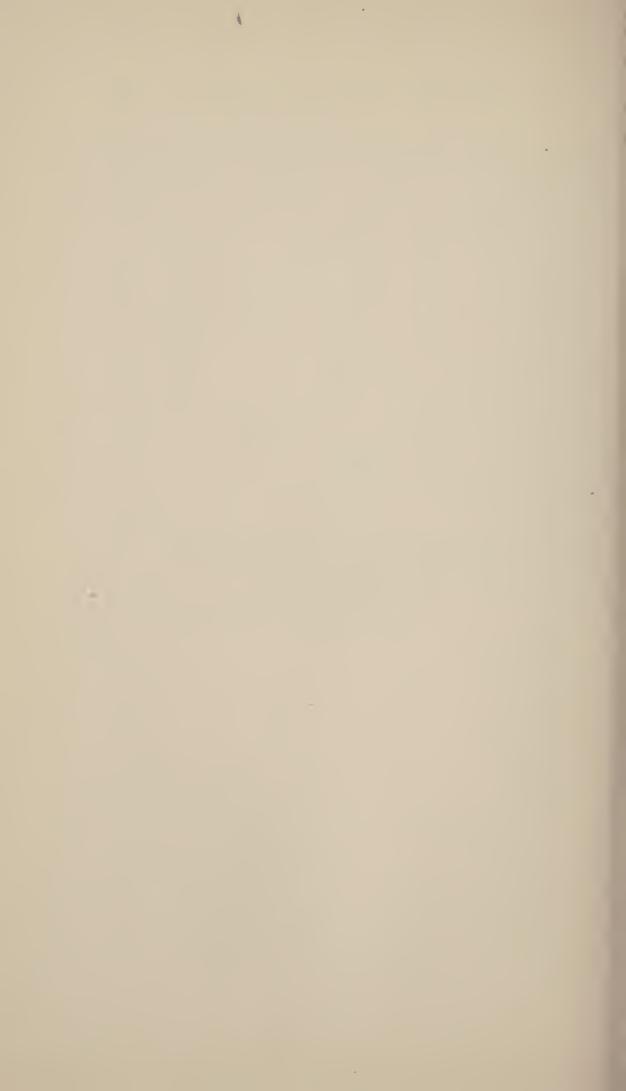
Such dedication, if made to students who have been incited to effort by a system of external stimulation is most farcical. Accepting it at its face value, how much of valid educational philosophy can be read into it; how much of genuine teaching and of habitu-

ation to right motives can be found between the lines! The task of achieving results such as this may not be the easiest of educational tasks. The line of least resistance in this case is that followed by the customs that so almost universally exist. The task of achieving results along the line of greater resistance may indeed be more difficult, may demand the services of educational artists rather than of artisans, but it is possible of achievement. We believe that relief is more than possible, that it is probable. There are signs of promise in the bold declarations we have quoted, in the attitude of some persons prominent in educational circles. These signs of promise are not more encouraging to those who hope for better things than is the response that is oftentimes given by parents to the expression of the larger hope.

But in the meantime the homes can become a counteracting factor, if they feel the need of so doing. Most homes at present are co-operating factors, however, and very intensely so at times. The home can very effectively guard the children against the dangers of the system, by cultivating a healthy lack of respect for such appeals, and by nourishing the natural motives that should prompt to effort. This rare bit of school-boy conversation fell upon our ears some years ago. One boy, speaking of some branch of study, said to his companion, "I have seven 'zipps' in that." The companion's reply was, "Heavens!" We regret that we did not look into the conditions that made this conversation possible. For the boy who so complacently possessed the "zipps" we have admiration. Such boys are safe, only awaiting the touch of the artist teacher. Some such disregard for the system is at present the only safeguard.

## XIII.

THE AGE OF SPIRITUAL AWAKENING.



## THE AGE OF SPIRITUAL AWAKENING.

AT what age shall we expect, or try to obtain, the spiritual awakening of children, whether the effort be put forth by home or by Bible School? At what age shall we expect or try to obtain that intensification of religious interest that shall express itself in a public confession of Jesus Christ in accordance with His injunction to confession as a badge of fellowship and of loyalty? At what age shall we expect, or try to obtain, on the part of those who have been indifferent to the things of the spiritual life, a change in life attitude whereby the center of interest and of devotion shall pass from self to God and fellow-man?

These questions, and their variant forms, express the problem of our concern.

The problem may be approached in either of two ways.

There is, first, the ever open, easily traveled, ofttimes exalted, and, to many, peculiarly sat(243)

isfactory deductive way. Or, the way may be more descriptively characterized as the way of hasty generalization. The latter characterization strips the way of a term that lends dignity to it, and at the same time calls our attention to its element of danger.

The ease with which we rise to general principles which we deductively employ in individual cases is apparent to anyone on reflection. But this very ease should raise suspicions as to the validity of the process, Who has not heard persons speak with a conviction that evidenced expectation of ministers' children being worse than the children of the laity? Have you never known questionable, even immoral, actions to be excused on the ground that young men "must sow their wild oats"? Hasty generalizations, these; both far wide of the truth, and fraught with a potency for harm when deductively applied to individual cases. These are types of hasty generalizing.

Whatever other elements enter into the explanation of the lodgment and of the dominancy of a hasty generalization, the following

is often the process by which it takes up its sway. A thought comes rambling into our mind. It is our own thought, our conception, our theory. Swayed by the peculiar emotional thrill that accompanies thought products that can be labeled as our very own, we accept it, we apply it, we defend and propagate it, little thinking that our parentage to the thought demands unusual precaution in order that we may not view it through prejudiced eyes. The deductive application of the principle is legitimate; the fallacy is found in the abbreviation, or complete elimination, of the inductive process whose product a principle should be.

Thus a single bit of experience, unverified by repeated and closely scrutinized and interrogated instances in our later experience, or in the experience of others, comes frequently to be determinative of conduct, gaining in the number of its adherents; but ever having the same defects. For, the mere test of the numerical strength of the holders of a view or attitude is by no means an argument for the validity of that view or attitude. So long as mere assertion is sufficient to win adherents to the thing

asserted, in entire disregard of the reasonableness or unreasonableness of the thing—at times in an apparently direct variation in the intensity of the adherence with the unreasonableness of the thing adhered to—we need not be surprised to find error popularly acclaimed.

This deductive way is the way traveled by many who claim to have come upon a solution to our problem. A limited experience, ofttimes clothed in a "my-experience-is" statement uttered in a tone that is eloquent of finality; a limited experience that has been uninterrogated in the light of theory or of a body of knowledge bearing on the subject; sometimes an interpretation of some portion of the Scriptures—often rather a misinterpretation due, among other things, to a mental warping by the heat of preconception; a flitting thought of how things might be done lodges and becomes insistent; these, one or all, have contributed to establish views and attitudes held by some who very sincerely seek to further the Kingdom by means of the Bible School. That this is often the method of approach to the problem under consideration can be seen between the lines and in the logic of some things that have been written in very recent years.

Among the answers to the problem that have been gotten in this way there is a marked discrepancy. Some would have all children wear "regulation" religious clothes, however ill fitting and uncomfortable they might be to the wearers; others, apostle-like, would find no room in the Church for children—would demand an intellectual apprehension of a theological system as a necessary prerequisite to Church and Christian fellowship.

But there is a second way of approach to our problem, a way more tedious, more difficult, less traveled, yet withal more reliable and helpful. This second way of approach is by the way of the child, in whose nature there are to be found laws of growth and development that have been put there by the Creator, the author of the child's nature, to the end that they might be used in securing the ends made possible to that nature by its author. Among these ends are to be included the acceptance of the Christ as a personal Saviour, a

declaration of loyalty to Him, and the entering into that fellowship with the Father which brings the peace the world cannot understand, the fellowship to which Christ is the way.

To eliminate this end from the ends possible to children, to make it less than our chief end, is to reduce the Bible School and its work to the level of an "ethical culture" cultus; to do this is to give stones to those whose needs are asking of us bread. To eliminate this end, to refuse to let it be chief among the ends, is to deprive children of the chief dynamic whereby shall come into their lives and characters as permanent and abiding factors the virtues about which ethical culturists profess to concern themselves; to say nothing about depriving the children of things which, though shunned by ethical culturists as beyond comprehension and therefore non-existent and non-operative, are known to many to be most precious and inspiring verities.

The validity of this second way of approaching the problem can be assailed only by calling in question its fundamental postulate, namely, that there are laws of development that hold

with an inclusiveness that embraces matters of the religious life. But though there are those who do not approach the problem by the second way, as is evidenced by their answers to the problem, we know of no one who undertakes to defend a proposed solution of the problem by denying the existence of such laws of growth as the second way of approach postulates.

We deem it a gratuitous task to attempt a defence of this postulate, easy as such a defence would be, abundant as is the material out of which such a defence could be built. It is by the second way we have sought for light on the problem of The Age of Spiritual Awakening.

Following a course of lectures given in the Summer Schools of the Pennsylvania Sabbath School Association in 1900, there occurred some discussion in which the conversion ages as set forth in curves taken from Professor Starbuck's work were questioned. This

<sup>1 &</sup>quot;Psychology of Religion." Contemporary Science Series.—Scribners.

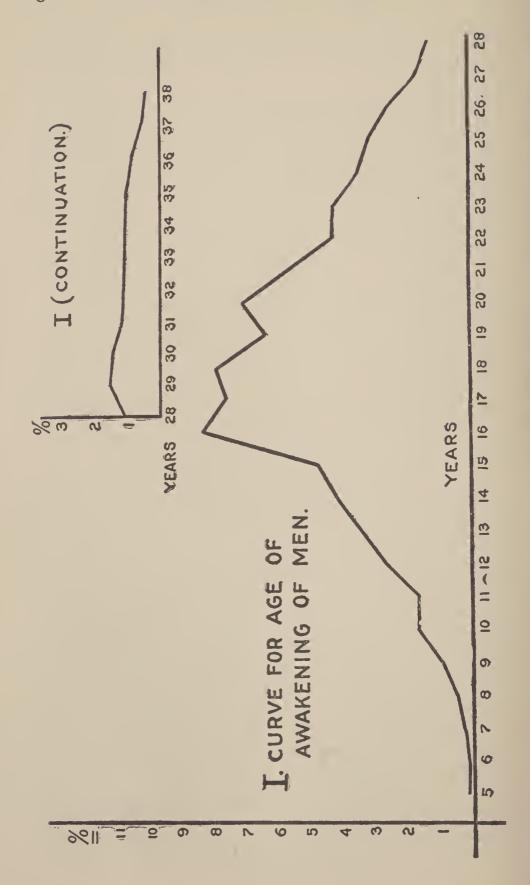
questioning led to the study whose results are now to be given.

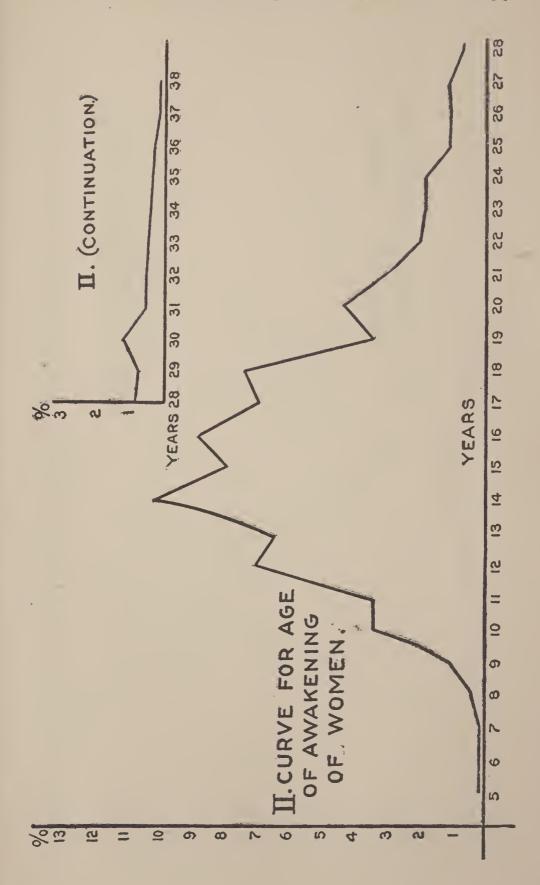
The concern of the study is primarily with the question of the age at which an awakening on the part of a young person should be looked for, should be sought after. For an answer to this question the needs of experience call.

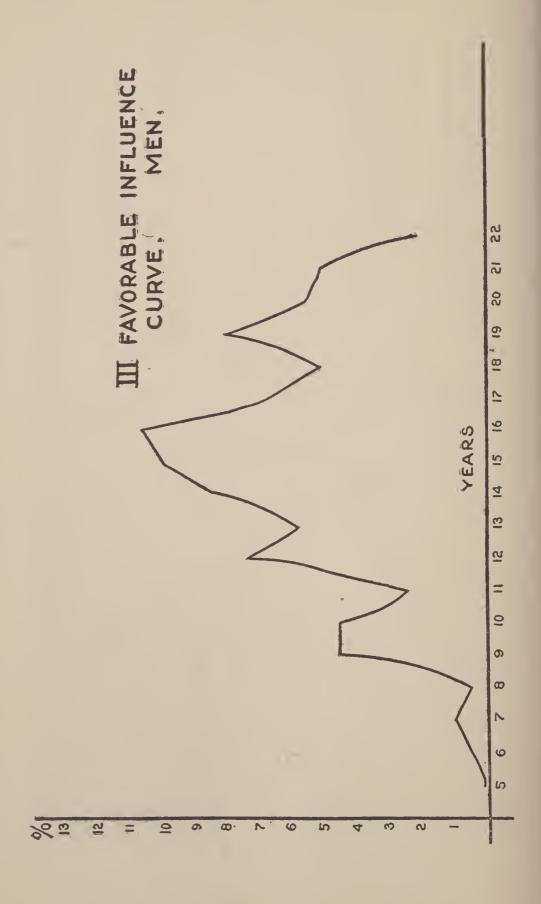
Approximately ten thousand obituary notices from the Christian Advocate, of New York, were made accessible to us by Miss Josephine L. Baldwin, the editor of the Memoir Department of the Advocate. These memoirs were carefully examined, with the result that almost five thousand were available for our study. There were 2276 available memoirs of men and 2542 of women. The memoirs cover all the decades of the nineteenth century, with the varying conditions of interests that may have existed at different times in the century. They represent various sections of the country, thus eliminating any element that by dominating a small section of country might materially affect the result of such a study. They have to do with those who have been members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

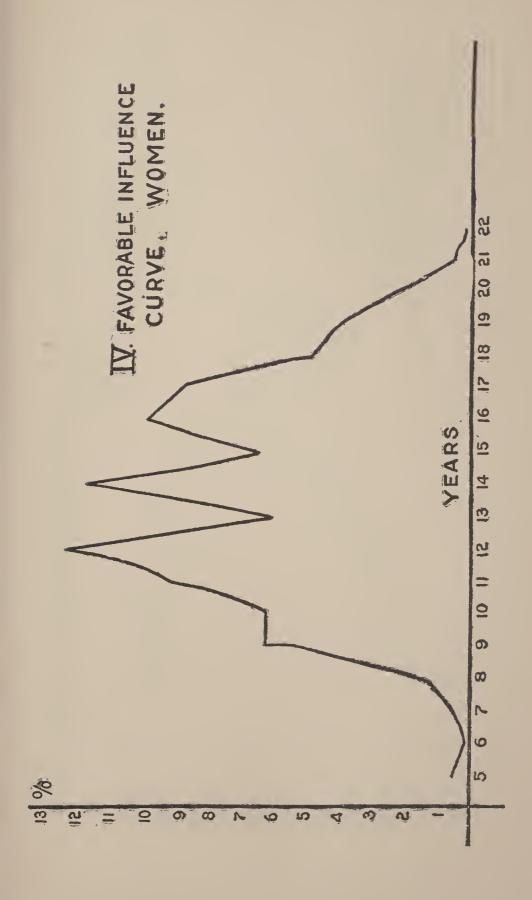
This study of this one phase of the question of spiritual awakening—the psychology of the question is not entered into at all—is different from other studies of the same phase of the question in two respects: in the very much greater number of cases studied, and in the fact that it has made possible the plotting of a curve of the awakenings of those who have been under influences that have made, or should have made, an atmosphere favorable to a growth of the religious phase of life.

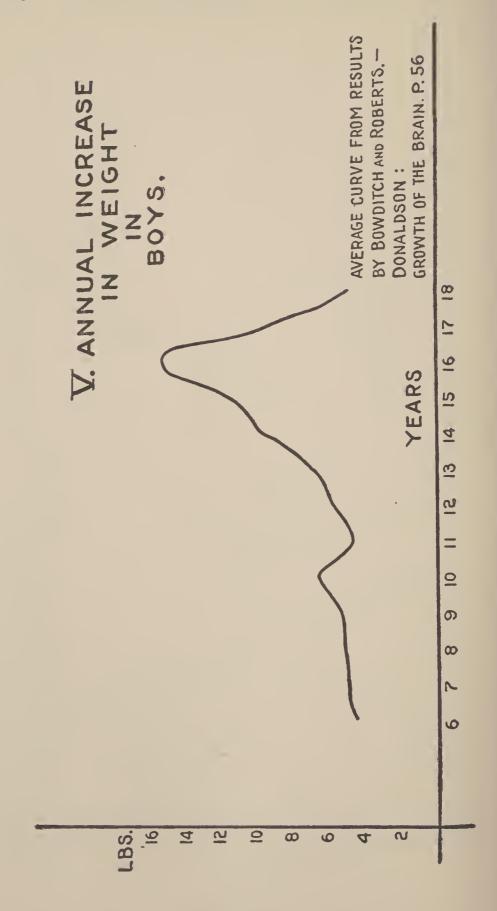
The "favorable home influence curve" is of special significance. And, in view of the significance attaching to it, it is to be regretted that it represents a comparatively small number of cases. A study now under way promises to increase largely the number of cases usable in studying the significance of early influences in determining the time of a decision or awakening. In the "favorable influence" curve there are represented 195 men and 169 women.

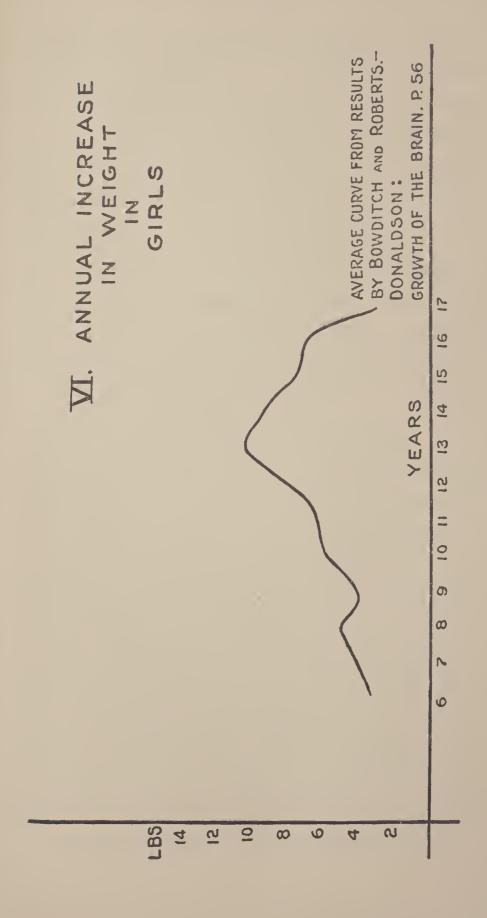












If the curves stood alone with nothing of a corroborative nature to increase our faith in their reliability, we should doubtless be constrained to feel that they have, at least, a measure of suggestiveness in them that religious workers might well heed. But there are reasons for believing that they do not stand alone, that there are corroborative facts that emphasize these same stages of life and that tend by themselves to generate an expectation of religious significance attaching to the same years.

An intellectual corroboration of certain years as marked off and differentiated from others is not easily defended, in view of the fact that the higher so-called "faculties" may early put themselves into evidence, the phenomena of sense perception being explainable in terms and processes of logic, as Commissioner Harris has interestingly shown. Though such intellectual corroboration has been attempted, the correspondence having been worked out in detail, we prefer to do little more than point out the fact that there is a

<sup>1 &</sup>quot;Psychology of Religion."—Starbuck, page 34 ff.

general corroboration of the curves that may be found in the realm of intellect. Beyond this we do not now care to go, not wishing to weaken our contention by the introduction of elements that themselves need to be defended, that cannot by any means be regarded as established.

There are, however, two classes of facts that seem to serve as corroborators of the awakening curves. These classes of facts are the ones that grow out of, or connect themselves with, physical growth and the precocity of girls.

The curves for increase in weight are the average curves plotted from the results of measurements by Bowditch and Roberts.¹ They are copied here with approximate correctness. An examination of these curves (Fig. V. and Fig. VI.) in comparison with the awakening curves (Fig. I. and Fig. II.) shows a very pronounced correspondence between the two sets of curves, though the correspondence is not perfect and in detail. Activity in physical growth seems to parallel activity in spiritual growth. Curves for increase in

<sup>1 &</sup>quot;Growth of the Brain."—Donaldson, page 56.

height show in a much less satisfactory way, yet they show that there is an approach to a side-by-sidedness on the part of the physical and the spiritual elements in human nature.

The memoir curves show a precocity in girls in matters of the spiritual life. The same precocity of girls is found when we turn to the intellectual and to the physical realms.

Here, again, the intellectual corroboration has not been satisfactorily demonstrated, though we believe it to be possible of demonstration. Speaking of this form of precocity, \*Dr. Havelock Ellis, in his elaborate study of men and women, says:

"There is good reason to believe that girls are more precocious in intelligence than boys. . . . It would be in harmony with what we know of the physical development of the sexes, and it has been observed independently." <sup>1</sup>

But the independent observation here referred to is as yet rather too limited for us to get from it more than a strong indication

<sup>1 &</sup>quot;Man and Woman," page 177.

of what is likely to be positively and satisfactorily established in the near future.

In the case of physical precocity there is no such uncertainty. One can here speak of "what we know." The various height and weight curves that have been plotted all teach this fact of physical precocity. (Compare Figs. V. and VI.) When we turn to the matter of pubertal development we find the same facts existing, the same law holding. Dr. Ellis speaks of

"... the general rule that the evolution of puberty is more precocious in girls than in boys, being both begun and completed at an earlier age." 1

Though one might contend that there is little of value in this corroboration of the curves, it is hardly conceivable that one of open mind could reflect on these corroborative facts and escape the inference that there is in the curves a measure of suggestiveness that religious workers may well ponder.

In the interpretation of the curves under consideration we are concerned at present with

<sup>1 &</sup>quot; Man and Woman," page 36.

one thing alone, i.e., the practical guidance they may yield us as we concern ourselves with the religious nurture of the young. Nor is this a disclaimer of a scientific interest in the problem. For the function of science is said to be threefold. Science is primarily a gatherer of facts. At whatever cost, whatever the risk, whatever the superstructure to be built upon or by means of them, science seeks for the facts of the universe. But it refuses to be satisfied with facts, however great the mass of them may be. It seeks by means of comparison, analysis and synthesis to group the facts, to reach generalizations, the validity of which can be tested and relied upon in the affairs of life. Science is an organizer of guidance, of helpfulness, by whose aid one can deal with experiences of to-day in the light of experiences of the past, thus avoiding the groping and uncertainty that characterized those past experiences. Beyond this gathering of facts and this organizing of guidance out of the gathered facts, science is a projector of hypotheses, by the aid of which it seeks to peer behind the facts, to look at the

sources whence the facts have come to be. In all three of these functions science encounters limitations, but most of all does it encounter them in the third. Yet it is in the realm of the third function that we find, in the name of science, arrogance and assumption and overweening confidence. It is in this realm that antagonisms to spiritual things arise, that faith is tabooed. And, too, it is in this very realm that science makes most peremptory demand for faith on the part of worshipers in its temple. A failure to distinguish among the three tones in the voice of science, which, one ahead of "Orator Puff," speaks now in one tone, now in another, now in another still, causes confusion and perplexity. If we will give to science speaking in the voice of its third function the same hearing we give it when it speaks in either of the other voices, we shall surely be led astray many times. And the tendency to exalt hypotheses into the dignity and into the function of generalizations is abroad—is to be found in educational and in theological thought. The fact that we prefer to call to our aid none of the

educational hypotheses as we approach an interpretation of the curves should not lead to a rejection of the messages the curves have for us. We elect to remain in the first two realms of science in this study. Nor can this be construed into a denial of the legitimacy of the third realm. Its legitimacy cannot be denied. Nor can we grant its serviceability for our present purpose.

These are the messages of the curves as we hear them:

(1) There is a possibility of a late-in-life spiritual awakening. Blessed assurance to those interested in the mature and in the aged who have not as yet enlisted in the King's army! This is the teaching of God's word, too. It is never too late for an awakened soul seeking the Christ to find Him. We may work and pray with some reason to hope, so long as our impenitent loved ones, or friends, live.

But this possibility is limited, or offset, by an ever-increasing preponderance of improbability, the very thought of which appalls, and should be to us an inspiration to effort while the day is, before the night comes. This gliding of the curves downward and still downward almost to zero spells out to a reflective mind the significance of "to-day . . . harden not your hearts." There is in these curves for those beyond the age of sixteen nothing whatever that can be pressed into support of the tendency to delay a decision of this most vital of all life's questions—the question of the soul's right adjustment to God through Jesus Christ.

- (2) The possibility of a very early awakening is shown by the curves, and, in view of the Master's attitude to children, should not be forgotten. But the tendency of to-day is rather to over-emphasize the Master's attitude; interpreting it with an intensity which, though it accords with some preconceptions, is not made necessary, if it is at all justified by the word of God. As a corrective to this tendency the curves remind us of the overwhelming preponderance of improbability of a very early awakening.
- (3) There are ages at which an awakening is more probable than at any other age. This fact is read from the crests of the curves.

These ages of marked, or increased, probability of an awakening cast themselves into a series showing the decreasing probability. These series for men and for women are as follows:

	First.	Second.	Third.	Fourth.	Fifth.	Sixth.
Men	16 14	18	20 18	14(?)	12 20	10

- (4) Whatever science shall finally say as to the differences or resemblances between men and women, and especially as to their spiritual nature, the curves show an earlier maturity of that spiritual nature in women than in men. They should, therefore, be treated from a different standpoint from that of men, and men from that of women. To expect a son to mature at the age at which a daughter does, or a daughter to mature at the age at which a son matures, is to ignore the lesson of the curves, and perhaps to work damage that can be retrieved with difficulty, if at all.
- (5) The curves of those whose homes were favorable to religious growth may not have

the same reliability as those of the general curves, because of the smaller number of cases represented by them. But with what reliability they have they emphasize the importance of the home as a factor, not in changing the crest years, but in securing a larger percentage of awakenings at the earlier crest ages, in the case of men and women alike. The persistence of the crest ages as the waves roll higher at the earlier years is a phenomenon worthy of further study, and one that affords opportunity for the exercise of the function of hypothetical reasoning. These favorableinfluence curves in no way detract from the magical significance of home. How plainly and with what Biblical correctness and correspondence they spell out the worth-whileness of parental and home religion!

The graphic representation of the potency of favorable early influences upon the age of spiritual awakening is shown by a comparison of Figs. III. and IV. with Figs. I. and II. respectively.

With the general curves as the basis of comparison, the pronounced elevation of the favorable-influence curves at and before the age of sixteen and the consequent and to-be-expected depression of the same after sixteen will not fail to be noticed. This fact bears upon a very recent deliverance of psychology as it seeks to reinforce the pulpit.—There are many ways in which such reinforcement is possible.

Professor Starbuck, in an article whose caption is more "catchy" or "taking" than it is expressive of truth, an article which over-zeal-ously contends for its contention, says:

". . . It looks as if children were predestined to attain, on an average, a certain efficiency at a definite time, regardless of what one does. . . . Nature has decreed its time. Thus it is that there are fixed times and seasons in religious maturity. This fact is set forth conclusively, I believe, in the studies that have been made upon the most frequent time of spiritual awakening. (See, for example, my volume, 'The Psychology of Religion.') It makes no difference in what part of the country people live, to what denomination they belong, or whether or not they have been subject to stimulating

influences, the age of most frequent religious awakening is about the same year." [Italics ours.]

There are two features of this article to which exception may be taken.

The first feature is that of the implication of the caption—predestination determined by "the nature processes." There is in the legitimate interpretation of conversion curves no intimation of a predestination of any kind, unless of a kind not defined clearly by the author and not connoted by the term as commonly used. Surely little of helpfulness is to be gained by either the pulpit or psychology from a using of terms that do not apply in their accepted connotation and whose new and vaguely intimated significance can be expressed more clearly by the use of words whose meaning is plain. The article does no more in the line of "predestination" than demonstrate that there is a greater probability of one's spiritual awakening occurring at some ages than at others.

<sup>1 &</sup>quot;Psychological Predestination."—Homiletic Review, September, 1906.

As a means of accounting for "predestination," the author resorts to heredity, and in doing so minimizes the function of nurture, or environment. He thinks from reading the study of twins, by Galton, that

"One is compelled to sympathize with Galton's conclusions: 'There is no escape from the conclusion that nature prevails enormously over nurture, when differences of nurture do not exceed what is commonly to be found among persons of the same rank of society and in the same country.'"

Thus is nurture minimized. But there is a fact connected with Galton's study that ought to be made prominent. He studied the following classes of cases:

- I. Twins alike in early years and educated together = Similar nature and similar nurture.
- II. Twins "exceedingly unlike in child-hood," and "having the same home, the same associates, the same teachers, and in every other respect the same surroundings." = Dissimilar nature and similar nurture.

But these classes of cases do not exhaust the possibilities of the study of twins. There are yet two other possibilities:

- I.—III. Twins similar in nature subjected to dissimilar nurture.
- II.-IV. Twins dissimilar in nature subjected to dissimilar nurture.

Might it not be that if these classes of cases were to be studied a modification of the conclusions would be necessary? Similar treatment of children of dissimilar endowment would tend to continue the dissimilarity, as would similar treatment of similarly endowed children tend to continue the similarity. And, finding similarity and dissimilarity in these respective classes after a similar treatment does not justify a conclusion against nurture and in favor of nature. Nature alone was varied in Galton's study. Nurture should have been varied as well. Had this been done and the respective similarity and dissimilarity of classes III. and IV. continued, one could have accepted the conclusions; for, as Galton himself concedes,

"It seems contrary to all experience that nurture should go for little." Over against this fatalism of heredity—spelled with a capital by many—there is a tendency abroad among scientific workers to give due prominence to nurture. Let us hear some testimonies, none of which denies a potency to heredity, all of which assert a potency for nurture.

"Moreover, heredity is not the grim ogre it seemed in the *Elsie Venner* days, when the great applications of biological discoveries to humanity were first made. We know that the influences of environment and of education [nurture] can modify the stuff of humanity, physically, mentally and morally, in simply a marvelous degree." <sup>1</sup>

Dr. Oppenheim <sup>2</sup> re-works over some of the Dugdale material relative to the "Jukes" family in such a way as to show the large part nurture must have played in the history of this notorious family, usually used to point a moral along the line of heredity alone. In his work on "The Development of the Child," (page 92), we read:

<sup>1 &</sup>quot; Moral Education."—E. H. Griggs, page 184.

<sup>2&</sup>quot; The Development of the Child," page 189 f.

"Instead of saying, 'Like father, like son,' one rather should say, 'As lives the father, so lives the son.'"

## Guyau says:

"Suggestion [but one factor in nurture], which creates artificial instincts, capable of keeping in equilibrium the hereditary instincts, or even of stifling them, constitutes a new power, comparable to heredity itself." Drummond places the two factors under consideration upon the same plane, saying:

"These two, Heredity and Environment, are the master influences of the organic world. These have made all of us what we are. These forces are still ceaselessly playing upon all our lives." 2

Thus do we find that there is very respectable authority for refusing to be fatalists in our attitude to the problems of the spiritual life and its nurture. And to us the attitude that duly emphasizes nurture is the more hopeful attitude, the one from which there

<sup>1&</sup>quot; Heredity and Education," xxiv.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," chapter on Environment.

comes inspiration to effort in the nurture of the young. Rather than accept the doctrine of "predestination" through heredity, as long as the fact has not been demonstrated, we prefer to hold, with Chamberlain, that

"Heredity, unless it is pathological, can be conquered, for *it has nothing absolutely* fatal about it." [Italics ours.]

The second feature of the article on psychological predestination to which exception is taken is that of the theory that it does not matter, after all, what we do to or with young people. The time of their awakening is fixed, and fixed irrespective of influences.

In refutation of this we are willing to let the favorable-influence curves speak. They clearly show that at least one line of influence is potent, even to a disorganization of curves plotted in disregard of this factor. We feel sure that these curves are in line with the facts of growth and development. There retardation or acceleration, within limits, hard to

<sup>1&</sup>quot;The Child—A Study in the Evolution of Man," page 81.

be fixedly set, is possible. The curves say the same is true of spiritual growth.

There are two antagonistic tendencies that have had eminence in the religious nurture of children. Each of these tendencies is vigorously defended by its adherents, at times, by means of the application, or misapplication, of Bible teachings. Both of these tendencies are dangerous and are alike unsupported by reason and by the Bible's teachings. The fact that these tendencies may be sanctioned by practice in ignorance of the fallacies that underlie them, in ignorance of the disastrous effects that may follow their employment, in no way mitigates the results. Ignorance never relieves the one who violates God's laws from suffering the penalty of that violation. God's laws are inexorable and cannot be violated with impunity.

The first of these mutually antagonistic tendencies is that tendency that makes for the repression of a spiritual awakening that has become existent. That such repression is possible we need not argue. That it is actual in many instances we all know too well.

This tendency roots itself in the wholly gratuitous assumption that the comprehension of a theological system, with or without its metaphysics, is a necessary prerequisite to Church fellowship and to the public enrollment for the service of Christ. Thus rooted, it grows vigorously until it demands of the young persons a religious experience and growth that should characterize those of more mature minds, or a knowledge of a system of religious thought that is beyond their comprehension.

The result is a temporary refusal to admit to fellowship, accompanied by more or less sincere injunctions to "wait awhile," "wait till you understand," and others of this ilk. Expressions such as these with which young people are forbidden the privilege of publicly confessing Christ are the fruitage of this tendency.

The curves are against this attitude; they are strong and uncompromising in their opposition. More than eight (8) per cent. of all the plotted awakenings of men occurred before or at twelve (12) years of age. Of the awaken-

ings of women, more than sixteen (16) per cent. occurred before or at twelve (12) years of age. When we turn to the favorable-home-influence curves these percentages rise from eight (8) to almost twenty-one (21) for men and from sixteen (16) to almost thirty-seven (37) for women.

The curves, in their antagonism to this tendency to repress an early awakening, are supported by three lines of argument: (a) the law of habituation; (b) the law of repressed interests; (c) the pathetic voice of experience.

In the light of the law of habituation we should expect early awakenings to be followed by lives unusually free from backsliding; for a large part of the philosophy of backsliding, if not the whole of it, is to be found in the fact of a negative habituation to spiritual things, the gift of early years to the more mature years of life. Our expectations, deductions from our knowledge of habit, are fully borne out in life. All the early awakenings studied in our curves were the beginning of, or a stage in the development of, a loyal, life-long service of Jesus Christ. The later careers of these

early awakened persons show a percentage of backsliding that flutters around the zero point.

A second fact that supports the curves as they plead with us not to repress an early awakening is found in the results of such repression.

Arguing from the unity of human nature, whereby analogies from other realms of mind hold in its spiritual realm, we should fear that the results of such repression would be disastrous. Professor James says:

"In all pedagogy the great thing is to strike the iron while hot, and to seize the wave of the pupil's interest in each successive subject before its ebb has come."

Another writer, Prof. E. B. Bryan, puts the same truth, stripped of the poetry which makes Prof. James' writings so 'delightful, into the following uncolored terms:

"If children at certain times have a longing for, or show an aptitude in, drawing, music, manual training, athletics, etc., but are deprived of the opportunity for culture along those lines, they are apt to lose their interest, or aptitude, or both."1

<sup>1 &</sup>quot; Pedagogical Seminary," Vol. VII., page 358.

Are, then, our fears of a similar result in spiritual repression justified? Does the same law pervade all realms of our nature? The same law does hold in the spiritual realm; and our fears are abundantly justified.

Let the vision of a sweet, spiritual-faced, elderly lady rise before us. She comes forward from the audience at the close of a study of the theme we are now considering, to say to him who has pleaded as earnestly as he could plead against the tendency towards spiritual repression:

"I want to tell you how true your contention is. My husband and I are members of the — Church. Our boy, when he was twelve, came to us asking permission to join the Church. We thought he was not old enough, and asked him to wait awhile." The fountains of the heart burst forth. With tear-filled eyes she adds:

"He is thirty now, and oh! how anxious we are for him to come! How earnestly we pray for it!"

The curves say that at thirty years only one and one-half (11/2) per cent. of the spiritual awakenings take place for men; at twelve years, and in Christian homes, seven and one-fourth (7¼) per cent. of men's awakenings occur. Pity the poor mother; the crosses that are hardest to bear are those that have added to their weight the consciousness that we ourselves have shaped and fashioned them.

The anxious mother is a type.

The second tendency referred to is the antagonist of this, that of spiritual over-pressure, over-stimulation. This tendency grows luxuriantly, feeding upon the very material by which the former tendency is destroyed. This is the tendency that threatens soon to displace the former entirely, and that will, by the principle of reaction, sooner or later, if unchecked, lead anew to the cultivation of the displaced tendency.

We fall back on the analogy between the spiritual and other realms of mental activity—an analogy that rests on the unity of our mental life, on the essential mental-process-sameness between spiritual things and things not so classed.

Falling back on this analogy, what do we

find? Over-pressure is regarded as possible and as actual, as operating with direful consequences, physical, mental, and moral. Charles Dickens, in his classic upon Over-pressure in Education, "Dombey and Son," has forcibly portrayed alike the physical death and the mental stagnation that may and often do result from what he calls a "hot-house process" in education. The subject of over-pressure has been studied by governmental direction in several European countries, and the Kaiser, in person, addressed the schoolmasters of his realm upon the matter. Allowing for highlycolored statement of the facts, we must conclude that it is possible, ofttimes actual, and, whenever existent, harmful.

All this is symptomatic. Disease lurks back of it. We are impatient for results, want results that show and lend themselves to tabulation and display. We worship precocity, and chafe under the divinely wisely-established plan of a long stage of preparation for the young of the human kind before it enters upon the fullness of maturity, and because of which it enters upon the greater fullness of maturity. We want to aid and hurry on the unfolding of the plant or bud; and, though we know that to do so would mar the perfection of the leaf or flower, it is with difficulty that we restrain ourselves and entrust the leaf or flower to the laws of its own unfolding.

We have learned that the beauty of the moth depends upon its being allowed to follow the laws of its nature, and that one touch of the would-be helpful hand both mars the beauty of the wing and takes away the power of flight. We are not as yet so wise in our dealing with children; have not learned that half of our lesson that teaches us to "let alone and trust nature more."

Guided by a preconception we are in danger of unduly hastening the development of the spiritual nature of children; of treating them as if there were no laws of their nature upon which reliance could be placed. Because of this children have been made, by hothouse religious processes, to simulate the experience and the testimony of adults, a thing that is abnormal and undesirable and dangerous.

Sir Aubrey De Vere, in "The Crusade," speaking of the effort made by the children, says:

"Alas! its lovely pageant, as a dream,
Faded! They sank not through ignoble fear,
They felt not Moslem steel. By mountain stream,
In sands, in fens, they died—no mother near."

Pathetic demonstration of the fact that children can be made to simulate adult life-attitudes. The skillful child-evangelist, using methods that too largely use, or better say abuse, the laws of suggestion, can make a very spectacular display of child "conversions."

An acquaintance, a trained kindergartner, one who shares with her husband his deep and practical interest in the problems of religious nurture, shuddered as she related to the writer the things she saw done in a city mission under the care of herself and husband. The things described were done by a professional child-evangelist. The things he did produced "results" that might be made to produce conclusive reading in defence of child-evangelism of a professional and revivalistic type.

Alas! the crimes against childhood, committed by church and by school, that can be atoned for by a spectacular display of results! But the record of such children's futures will, we fear, not "flutter near the zero mark in backsliding." And such persons, whether hot-housed at home or in church, once backslidden, grow cold and intensely indifferent to the claims of the Church. Cannot many of us testify to this?

The message of the curves to us when tempted to over-stimulate, to employ pressure, to resort to the hot-house with children—the message is, "Do not. There is a time for pressure; use it then."

The percentage of awakenings of men before twelve under favorable home-influence is twenty-one (21) per cent.; for women, thirty-seven (37) per cent. Over against these stand seventy-nine (79) per cent. of the men not awakened, despite the home influences, after twelve (12), of the women sixty-three (63) per cent.

Shall we then be indifferent to the religious nurture of children under twelve, as has been cogently, if illogically, argued by some? By no means. There is no age in one's life when the spiritual nature can be safely treated with indifference and with neglect. When Dr. E. G. Lancaster says:

"Religion must not be neglected. The welfare of the family and the state depend upon it as much as the interests of the individual soul," 1

he excepts no age during which we, either in the name of science or because of society's needs, may neglect with safety the matter of religion.

But the farmer who sows his grain in the fall is not indifferent to the fruitage time of the following summer. That I do not open the bud of beautiful promise is no evidence of my indifference to it and its flower of rare beauty to be. That I refuse to force its petals from the closely compact, natural arrangement is no proof that I have not dug about the stalk in the spring time, giving it such food as it needed; is no proof that I have not been watchful of the animal life that is an enemy to the perfection of the flower.

<sup>1&</sup>quot; Pedagogical Seminary," July, 1897, page 128.

Nor is the fact that we are not to unduly disturb the unfolding religious nature of children at early years an argument against our sowing seed, and digging and feeding the soul plant on which we hope to see the fragrant, beautiful bloom of a public confession of Jesus Christ.

If I concern myself about keeping the soulplant in the light of the truth of God as it is revealed in Jesus Christ, about environing it with an atmosphere that is surcharged with love to God and to fellow-men; if I procure for it food that will nourish the positive elements of its nature, and am careful to allow it ample exercise in accordance with its strength in resisting the winds that blow upon it; if I do these things I am not neglecting the nurture of the soul-plant. And some day, the probability is, I shall see blossoms and fruit upon the plant.

As this thought was being presented to a Bible School convention, some years ago, there sat in the audience a pastor who seemed to the speaker to be antagonistic to the viewpoint and the procedure growing out of it. At the close of the service he went to the one who had been contending that religious workers should concern themselves about matters of pure soul-atmosphere, healthful and nourishing food and adequate soul-exercise, and said to him: "I have five children who are servants of Christ. All five came to Him in just this way."

The memoir material emphasizes a fact about which the curves themselves are silent. There are many possible forms which the awakening, when it comes, may take. We should expect this. Numerous are the temperaments of men; almost as numerous are these reactions to the Spirit's influence. No one reaction should be exalted to a normative rank. Yet this is often done, and in very intense terms and ways.

Strange as it may seem, in our emphasis of one or another of the various spiritual experiences accompanying the awakening, we have too largely ignored a fact the memoirs urge us to consider. We have placed the emphasis on conversion, on a remarkable religious experience, on a religious "storm and stress period," on a great soul conflict, ere one's allegiance to the cross is complete. We have done this, too, to the disparagement of cases in which these elements have not been found.

An anxious father, a clergyman, sits by the bedside of his dying daughter, she about twelve years old. "She had been a bright, joyous girl, carefully trained, and all her life associated with the worship and instruction of God's house," but he had never known of any "experiences" in her life that he could honestly consider her conversion.

This is the thing we mean. One way only—perhaps the way of her father, who may have spent his earlier years in sin and waywardness.

It is with mingled indignation for, and sympathy with, the father that we read the incident and hear him ask, "My dear, have you found Jesus?"

Ponder the answer of the child, as she turns her eyes upon her father, saying," When did I lose Him, father?"

The possibility of one's never having had a consciousness of having lost the Christ, of having been estranged from Him, exists, according to the abundant testimony of the memoirs. So abundant is this testimony that we are firm in our conviction that this is the ideal, the normal way, and that all others, necessary as they are because of defective soul nurture, are abnormalities—deviations from God's fundamental plan.

Set in a setting of delightful and pedagogically suggestive fiction, the following lines from Kate Douglas Wiggins contain at once good religious pedagogy, safe and sound theology, and excellent common sense. And, supported by the memoir material, we commend the message of the lines to our fellow coworkers with God for the saving of the children through nurture. She says, in "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm":

"To become sensible of oneness with the Divine Heart before any sense of separation has been felt, this is surely the most beautiful way for the child to find God."

Nor is this way merely a matter of beauty.

Professor Coe's putting of this truth is as follows:

<sup>1&</sup>quot; Religion of a Mature Mind," page 210.

"Some, who should be counted happiest of all, have never known a negative period. Taught from infancy to count themselves the Lord's, they have never had any other fundamental preference."

It would seem, other lines of argument aside, that to reject this way as a way of finding God is to do two things:

- (1) To limit the Holy Spirit's power, thus making Him unable to work out His fruits in the lives of children.
- (2) To make more difficult the Holy Spirit's work of conversion, because of habituation, and thus lessen the probability of the occurrence of conversion. This result the curves very plainly demonstrate.

There are three injunctions given by the Master that have an application here. He said:

"Go out . . . and compel them to come in."

We must heed this injunction. But to build upon it alone a practice or system of dealing with men in trying to bring them to the cross would be to repeat a mistake already too frequently made in the history of theological discussion—the mistake of building upon an inadequate foundation, as if a few words were sufficient to describe in all its matchless perfection the Father's Plan of Redemption.

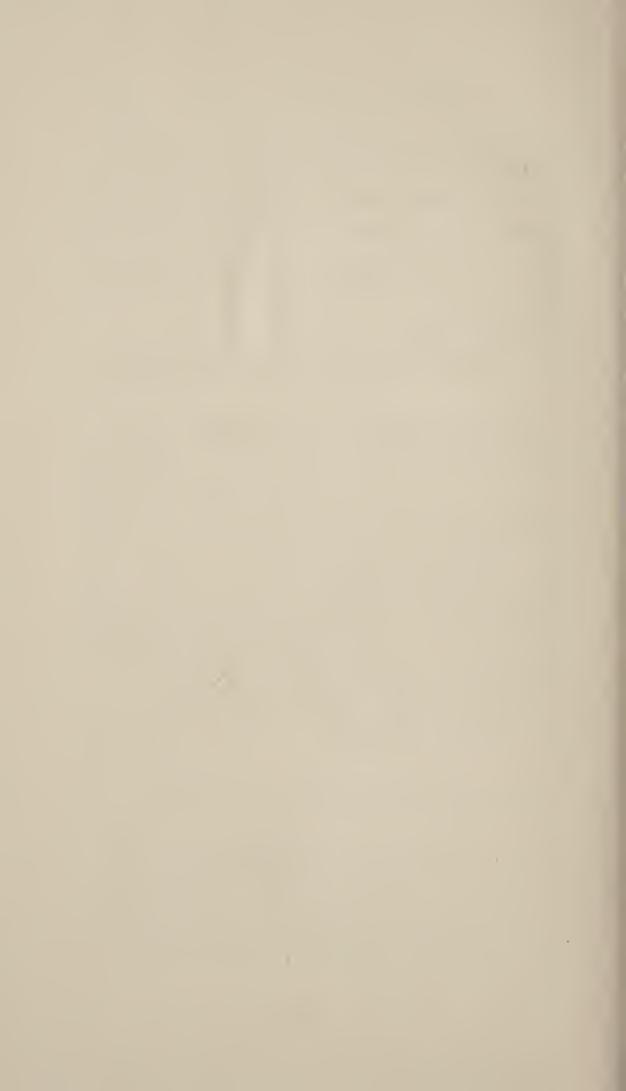
He also said:

"Suffer the little children to come unto me."

Thus does He seem to teach that our work with the children is rather that of removing from their way obstructions to their coming. He here certainly rebukes all those who hold the you-are-too-young attitude. And, as we understand the injunction, there is in it no sanction for the hot-house, forcing processes that parade in display their "results."

It was the same Teacher who said:

"Feed my lambs."



## AFTER-WORD.

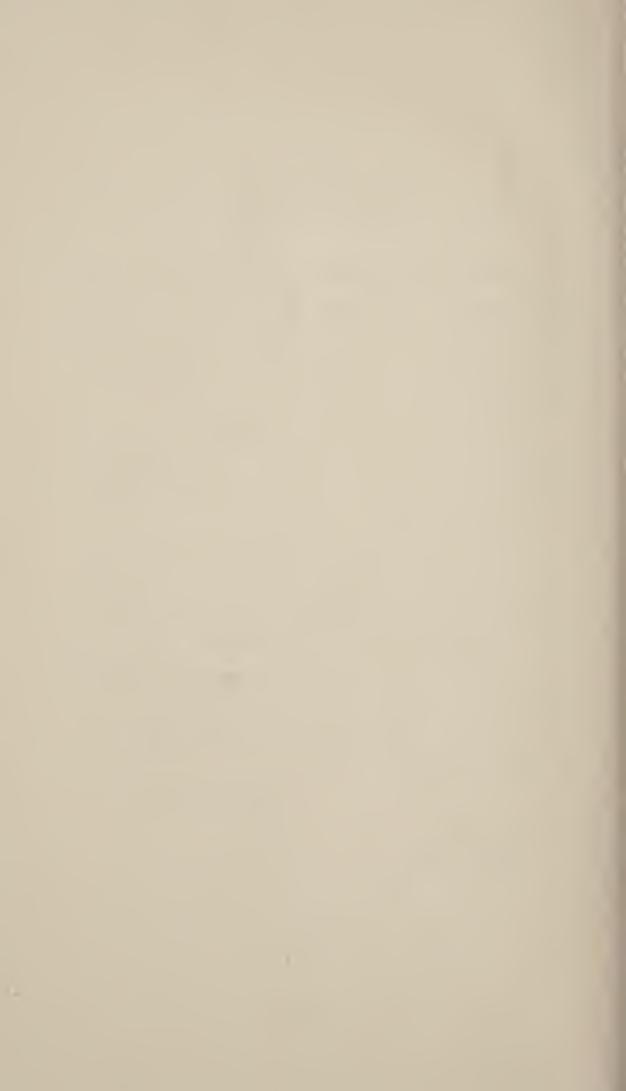
Some of these studies were prepared for presentation at conventions, others for publication in a periodical. Because of this fact an element of repetition entered into them which has been eliminated only in part.

The author's indebtedness to the literature of the subject has been carefully acknowledged in the references.

To Miss Josephine L. Baldwin, who suggested the use of the *Christian Advocate* Memoirs, and who furnished the Memoir files; and to Mr. William J. Semelroth, who as editor of the *World Evangel* kindly permitted the use of material that had appeared in the *Evangel*, the author gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness.

A. B. B. V. O.

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